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you know, is identical with that which in Eastern lands has been known by various names—as Tao, in China; as the Brahmavidyâ, in India; as the Gnosis, among the Greeks and the early Christians; and as Theosophy through the Middle Ages and in modern times. It implies always a knowledge, a Wisdom that transcends the ordinary knowledge, the ordinary science of the earth; it implies a wisdom as regards life, a wisdom as regards the essential nature of things, a wisdom which is summed up in two words when we say "God-Wisdom." For it has been held in elder days—although in modern times it has become largely forgotten—that man can really never know anything at all unless he knows himself, and knows himself Divine; that knowledge of God, the Supreme, the Universal Life, is the root of all true knowledge of matter as well as of Spirit, of this world as well as of worlds other than our own; that in that one supreme knowledge all other knowledges find their root; that in that supreme light all other lights have their origin; and that if man can know anything, it is because he is Divine in nature, and, sharing the Life that expresses itself in a universe, he can know at once the Life that originates and the Matter that obeys.

Starting from such a standpoint, you will at once realise that Theosophy is a spiritual theory of the world as against a materialistic. It sees Spirit as the moulder, the shaper, the arranger of matter, and matter only as the obedient expression and servant of the Spirit; it sees in man a spiritual being, seeking to unfold his powers by experience in a universe of forms; and it declares that man misunderstands himself, and will fail of his true

end, if he identifies himself with the form that perishes instead of with the life which is deathless. Hence, opposed to materialism alike in science and philosophy, it builds up a spiritual conception of the universe, and necessarily it is idealistic in its thought, and holds up the importance of the ideal as a guide to all human activity. The ideal, which is thought applied to conduct, that is the keynote of Theosophy and its value in the varied worlds of thought; and the power of thought, the might of thought, the ability that it has to clothe itself in forms whose life only depends on the continuance of the thought that gave them birth, that is its central note, or keynote, in all the remedies that it applies to human ills. Idealist everywhere, idealist in religion, idealist in art, idealist in science, idealist in the practical life that men call politics, idealist everywhere; but avoiding the blunder into which some idealists have fallen, when they have not recognised that human thought is only a portion of the whole, and not the whole. The Theosophist recognises that the Divine Thought, of which the universe is an expression, puts limitations on his own power of thought, on his own creative activity. He realises that the whole compels the part, and that his own thought can only move within the vast circle of the Divine Thought, which he only partially expresses; so that while he will maintain that on the ideal depends all that is called "real" in the lower worlds, he will realise that his creative power can only slowly mould matter to his will, and though every result will depend on a creative thought, the results will often move slowly, adapting themselves to the thought that gives them birth. Hence, while

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By

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Part I

Psychism and Spirituality
The Place of Masters in Religions
Theosophy and the Theosophical Society

Three public Lectures delivered in the smaller Queen's Hall, London, on 16th, 23rd, and 30th June 1907.

Psychism and Spirituality

Our subject to-night consists of two words: psychism —spirituality. I am going to speak to you on the subjects denoted by these two words, because there is so much confusion about them in ordinary conversation, in ordinary literature, and out of that confusion much of harm arises. People think of one thing and use the name of the other, and so continually fall into blunders and mislead others with whom they talk. I want to-night to draw a sharp and intelligible division between psychism and spirituality; if possible, to explain very clearly what each of them means; so that, thoroughly understanding the meaning of the things, people may choose for themselves which of the two they desire to evolve, or unfold, within themselves. For if a person, desiring to unfold the spiritual nature, uses the means which are only adapted for developing the psychic nature, disappointment, possibly danger, will result; while, on the other hand, if a person desires to develop the psychic nature, and thinks that he will reach that development quickly by unfolding his spiritual powers, he also is equally doomed to disappointment; but in the second case, only to disappointment for a time. For while it is

not true that the great psychic is necessarily a spiritual person, it is true that the great spiritual person is inevitably a psychic. All the powers of Nature are subject to the Spirit, and hence, when a man has truly unfolded his spiritual nature, there is nothing in the lower world which is not open to him and obedient to his will. In that sense, then, the man who follows the spiritual path will not ultimately be disappointed if he is seeking psychic development, but the very seeking for it will, on the spiritual path, act as a certain barrier. I shall return to the point again presently, and show you in what sense, and why, it is true that the development of the psychic powers may hinder the unfolding of the spiritual.

Now, to distinguish clearly between the two, I will begin with two brief definitions. They will be expanded naturally in the course of the lecture, but I will define each of these two words in a single sentence so as to make the definition clear and brief. Spirituality is the Self-realisation of the One; psychism is the manifestation of the powers of consciousness through organised matter. Each word of that definition has its own value. We are far too apt, in our ordinary thought and talking, to limit the words "psychical," "psychic," or "psychism" in a quite illegitimate way, and the popular use of the term is illegitimate. It is generally used amongst us to mean unusual manifestations of the powers of consciousness, whereas, properly speaking, the word ought to cover every outer manifestation of consciousness, whether on the physical, on the astral, on the mental, or on the buddhic plane. It does not matter in what world you are

moving, in what matter your consciousness is acting; so long as it is utilising organised matter for its own expression so long are those manifestations psychic, and are properly included under the term psychism. You may perhaps wonder why I lay stress on this. You will see it at once if I remind you that unless we keep this definition in mind—accurate, legitimate as it is—we shall be making a division between the manifestation of the consciousness on the physical and on the astral and mental planes, between its manifestation in the physical and those in the astral and mental bodies; and if we do that the whole of our thought will be on mistaken lines. You need practically to be pressed back to what you know of consciousness on the physical plane, before you can thoroughly follow its manifestations on the astral and on the mental. If you try to separate off manifestations which are the same in kind though differing in degree, according to the fineness of the matter which is employed, if you try to separate them off, you will always regard what you call psychism—that is, astral and mental manifestations in the subtler bodies—in an artificial and unwise manner. If, on the other hand, you realise that consciousness is one, that its manifestation on any plane is conditioned by the matter of the plane, that it is one in essence, only varying in degree according to the lessening or the increase of the resistance of the matter of the planes, then you will not be inclined to take up exaggerated views with regard to what people are so fond of calling psychism. You will not denounce it in the foolish way of many people, because in denouncing it you will know that you denounce all intellectual mani-

festations, an absurdity of which very few people are likely to be guilty; if you take your intellectual manifestations in the physical world as admirable things, to be always encouraged, strengthened, developed, then you will be compelled, by parity of reasoning, to understand that the manifestations of the same consciousness in finer matter, astral or mental, are equally worthy, and no more worthy, of development, of consideration. You will not find yourself in the absurdly illogical position of declaring it a good thing to train the physical plane consciousness, while it is dangerous to cultivate the astral and mental plane consciousness. You will understand that all psychism is of the same kind, that on each plane the development of psychism has its own laws; but that it is absurd to admire the working of consciousness on the lower plane, and shrink from it as something dangerous, almost diabolical, when it appears on a plane higher than the physical.

It is this rational and common-sense view which I want to impress upon you to-night, to get you out of the region of mystery, marvel, wonder, and fear, which to so many people surround what is called psychism; to make you understand that you are unfolding consciousness, showing out your powers on one plane after another according to the organisation and the fineness of the bodies in which your consciousness is working; and that if you will only keep your common sense and reason, if you will only not allow yourself to be terrified by what at present is unusual, you may then walk along the psychic pathway in the astral or mental world, as resolutely, and with as great an absence of hysteria, as

you walk along the psychic pathway in the physical world. That is the general idea; and, of course, this is the meaning in which, after all, the word is often used down here. When you say "psychology" you do not mean only the workings of consciousness in astral and mental bodies; you mean the whole consciousness of the man, the workings of the mind, wherever the mind is active; the whole of that you include under "psychology." Why, then, when you change its form, should you narrow it down, as though that which is mind on one plane is not also mind on all planes on which the mind is able to function?

Now let us consider for a moment the workings of the mind on the physical plane: they are familiar. There is, however, one important point about them. In the materialistic science of the last century you had very widely spread, amongst scientific men, the view that thought was only the result of certain kinds of vibration in certain kinds of matter. I need not dwell on that. But you are aware that both in England, and more especially in France and Germany, most elaborate disquisitions were written to prove that thought was only the product of nervous matter. You rarely, I think never, now find a well-trained scientist prepared to commit himself to that position. Those who survive as representatives of that same school may do so, but they are literally survivals. The mass of psychologists of to-day admit that the manifestations of mind cannot any longer be regarded as the results of vibrations in the physical brain, that at least we must go beyond these limitations when dealing with the results of the study of

consciousness, as it is now studied amongst scientific men. They will no longer, then, regard thought as the product of matter. They certainly will not be prepared to go as far as I now propose to go, and say that the thinking organism is the production of thought—the very antithesis, you will agree, of the other position, but which is vital to the understanding of the unfolding of the powers of consciousness through matter. It is recognised in ordinary biology that the function appears before the organ. There I am on safe scientific ground. It is recognised that the exercise of the function gradually builds up the organ. All the researches into the simpler forms of organisms go to prove that. It is also recognised that when the exercise of the function has built the organ in a very simple form, the exercise of the function continually improves the organ which originally it builded. So far we are hand in hand with ordinary science. I think I shall not go too far in saying that a large number of the more scientific psychologists of today will at least agree that the brain as you find it in the adult man is very largely the result of the exercise of thinking through the earlier years of life. I do not think they would go so far as to say that thinking has literally produced it. They would, however, judging by very many things that have been said, be willing to admit that by hard thinking we can improve our apparatus of thought. That is one reason for thinking hard—in order to think better. And the harder you think, the more will your thinking instrument improve.

In my next step, however, I cannot by any stretching of ordinary science persuade it to accompany me,

or give me a foundation; for the point is that your consciousness, working on the next plane above the one on which the organ of consciousness is being built, is the shaper of that mechanism. To put it concretely: your physical brain is built up from the astral plane, and it is your consciousness working in matter finer than the physical which builds up the brain in the forming child within the limits laid down by karma. Now, that is a general law for healthy evolution. You will see the importance of this law a little further on. Every body which we possess — physical, astral, mental, buḍḍhic — is always built up by consciousness working in the plane next above it; the next plane, or world, is a world very much more "next" than you are next each other sitting here—not far away beyond the stars, removed by great spaces. It is interpenetrating you in every portion of your being. It is only "next" in the sense that the solids, liquids, and gases of your bodies are next each other in the body—not far away, but here. So that the working is of the closest and most intimate kind. Some of you who are students of Theosophical literature will remember that H.P.B. has spoken of all of us as working in the astral consciousness. You will see that you are not working with a physical consciousness in the literal sense of the term, if you think for a moment. How much do you know of the consciousness working in the various cells and tissues of your physical body? Practically nothing, except when you are ill. Only when the body is disorganised do you become conscious of that working. Normally, the motion of your blood, the building up by

assimilation of your muscles and nerves, the life of your cells, the protective action of some of the living cells in your body—the "devourers," as they are called—go on without your knowledge, without your thought, without your giving one moment's conscious attention to them. In the Perfect Man, the consciousness of all this is ever present, but in us, imperfect, it is not; we are not yet sufficiently vitalised and unfolded to carry on the whole of our consciousness, with full awareness of all its activities. We are only able to manage a very small part of it, and so have let go the consciousness that keeps at work the physical body, to concentrate ourselves in a higher world, and utilise the nervous mechanism as the apparatus of our thinking. That law obtains, then, all through. If you want to organise and build up your astral body, you can only do it from the mental plane. You must raise your thought to a higher power by concentration, by regular meditation, by deliberately working on the consciousness, before you can raise it to that power from which it shall be able to organise your astral body, as it has already organised your physical body. That is the reason why meditation is necessary in all these things; because without the creative power of thought we cannot organise the body in the world which is nearest to the physical.

Now, supposing that we recognise that our consciousness working in the physical brain, the instrument over which we have complete control, is continually at work contacting the outer world, using the brain as an instrument on which it can play, and continually bringing down from higher worlds impressions which it transmits more

or less perfectly to the physical plane, we need not dwell upon our ordinary thinking. Let us take thinking a little more unusual, where the finer part of the brain, its etheric matter, is being more largely vitalised, more definitely used. The powers of the imagination—the creative power—the artistic powers, all creative in their nature, these utilise most the ethers of the brain, and, by working in those, bring into activity the lower and coarser matter of the dense brain. Now, the thought passes from the consciousness through vehicle after vehicle to find its clear expression here. But do you not have many mental impressions that are not clear, not well defined, and yet which impress you deeply, and of which you feel sure? They are of many kinds, and reach you in many ways. What is important to you is simply this for the moment: that being surrounded by the astral and mental worlds, contacts from these are continually touching you, continually causing changes in your consciousness. If your astral body were thoroughly organised like your physical, the impressions made would be clear and sharp like the physical. If your mental body were well organised, the impressions of that plane, the heavenly plane, would be clear and sharp like the physical. But as the astral and mental bodies at this stage of evolution are not well organised, the impressions received by them, causing changes in the consciousness, are vague and indeterminate, and it is these which are generally called "psychic." And when you have a Psychical Research Society, it is not dealing with the ordinary processes of thought, but with those which are not ordinary; and all those things to which it gives many

strange names are all workings of the consciousness, in sheaths or bodies of which it has not yet gained the mastery, which it has not yet definitely organised for its purposes. Slowly and gradually they become organised, and strenuous thinking is the method for the astral body, and the working of the pure reason is the method for the mental body. Let us consider with regard to this, whether there is any other way of bringing the astral body and mental body into activity. For you may have noticed that I used the word "normal" evolution, orderly evolution on the lines of natural evolution, always from above. But you may stimulate it from below. It is possible to stimulate the astral body, at least, from the physical plane, but you do it at the cost of higher evolution a little later on, and the reason you can do it is simple enough. In the astral body are all the centres of your senses. You know how after death a man's desires are the same as they were during his physical life. You know how in dreams your desires resemble desires that you may have in your waking consciousness. The centre of all your psychic powers, of your conscious powers, the centres of these are in the astral, and if (especially with your senses, each of which has its own centre in the astral body) you overstrain the physical senses down here, you will get an action on the astral plane, but an unhealthy, because disorderly one, one not going along the line of evolution but trying to create from below instead of from above. None the less, you may have some results, and in the two famous Indian systems for developing the powers of the consciousness, and for unfolding the consciousness itself, you have this

recognised, and you read of Râja Yoga and of Hatha Yoga, of the Kingly Yoga and of the Yoga of Effort. The Yoga of Effort is Hatha Yoga, and is practised by physical means and followed by physical effects. The eye is stimulated in certain ways, and the effect of straining the physical eye is to bring about a certain limited kind of clairvoyance. You can gain it in that way by gazing into crystals, and so on. They do stimulate the centre of physical sight, but not the astral; and that is why they cannot go very far. You can get a certain amount of clairvoyance by these means, but you are only expanding your physical sight, and working on centres of the astral body connected with the physical organ of vision, the eye. The true astral sight is an entirely different thing. That comes from a centre of its own in the astral body. It has to be created from the mental body, as the organ of the physical was from the astral. The centre of that sight will be in the mental body and not in the astral, and only the organ of it in the astral body. The method of the Kingly, the Râja Yoga, is always by thought—concentrate, meditate, contemplate, think: by that means, in a healthy, normal, natural way you will inevitably develop the powers of sight on the astral, as in the course of Nature the powers of sight were developed on the physical plane. And if you realise that your consciousness is one, building its bodies for its fuller and more complete expression, that you are here in order to become masters of matter instead of its slaves, to become lords of matter, using every organ of matter for knowledge of the world to which that matter belongs, and not to be blinded by it, as we are for so long a time in

our climb upwards, then you will see that this natural development of astral powers is inevitable in the course of evolution, and all that you can do is to quicken it, following the line which Nature has traced. As Nature slowly will evolve in every human being the power of using the astral body as freely as you use the physical body now, so can you quicken the coming of that day for yourselves by understanding the powers of thought and turning them to the object you desire to obtain. There are many ways in which this may be done, and many rules you may learn for your guidance. Those rules may be summed up under two heads: clear and strenuous thinking, discipline for the bodies that you are trying to evolve; and also, I should add, for the body below them in evolution. Those are the two great laws for the safe evolution of these so-called psychic powers, what I call the powers of the consciousness on the astral and mental planes. There must be a discipline for the bodies, for you have to choose the material which will serve you best in the work you are doing out of the innumerable combinations of matter with which Nature presents you. You must choose the combinations that will serve your purpose, which you can utilise in the building of the organs of sense on plane after plane. Just as really as the man who is a drunkard will injure his nervous system by his excesses, and by supplying coarse and over-active compounds will injure the physical body, so making it a less useful instrument for the man —as any excess, not only drunkenness, but gluttony, profligacy, and so on—as these injure the physical body as an instrument of consciousness, and to have full and

perfect consciousness here we must train, discipline, build up our body with knowledge and with self-control, so also is that true on the higher planes. A regimen is necessary when you are dealing with the organisation of the subtler matter of the astral and mental worlds, for you cannot build up your physical body out of the coarser combinations of matter on the physical, and have finer combinations on the astral and mental. The bodies have to match each other. They have to correspond with each other; and as you find all sorts of combinations related the one to the other on every plane, you must choose your combinations on the physical if you desire to choose them also on the astral and mental. You cannot make your physical body coarse, and organise the astral and mental bodies for the finer purposes of the man; and you must settle that in your minds if you wish to try to develop these higher powers of consciousness. Not only because if you gather together the coarser materials of the astral world, you will find yourself hampered by them in the higher expression of consciousness, but also because the presence of these combinations in you exposes you to a number of dangers on the astral plane. The purer the elements of your astral body, the safer you are in your earlier wanderings on that plane. It is important to mention this, because in some of the schools of thought which are trying only to develop astral powers, you will find that they deliberately use other methods in order to make their astral body active. Many schools of the "left hand path" in India will use spirits, wines, meats of all sorts, in order to bring about a certain astral condition, and they succeed,

because by these means they attract to themselves, and for a time govern, the elemental powers of those lower planes—the elementals of the lower astral worlds. So that you may find that an Indian, who knows a little of this and wants to use it for his own purposes, will deliberately use these things which are attractive to the elementals of those lower worlds, and gather them around him and use them. But he does it knowing what he does, and aiming at that which he desires to conquer. But amongst those who practise black magic of the higher kinds—of the mental kinds—you have an asceticism as stern and rigid as has ever been used by those who are trying to develop their higher bodies for nobler ends. It is a mistake to think that the brothers of the dark side are, as a rule, licentious and indifferent to what you call morality. On the contrary, they are exceedingly strict. Their faults are the faults of the mind, not the faults of the lower desires, of the organs of the different bodies which may gratify them. Their faults are the more dangerous faults of mental powers misused for personal ends. But they realise very well that if they want the mental powers and the higher ranges of those powers, they must be as rigid in the discipline of the lower bodies as any pupil of the White Lodge could be. Take it, then, that to develop in this way, a regimen for the bodies, as well as the strict working and training of the mind, is absolutely necessary. But with these the result is sure. You cannot set a time for the result, for it depends where the worker is beginning in his present life. In all these matters Nature's laws will not permit of what is called miraculous growth, and if you find

persons developing psychic powers very rapidly, when perhaps they have been meditating only a few months, it is because in a previous life they have cultivated these powers and are taking up their lessons again in a more advanced class of evolution, and not in the infant class, as many do in the present life. So that there are differences. Some now beginning are not likely to succeed in their present incarnation; but if that discourages them, one can only say: "If you do not do it now, you will have to begin again next life, and so on and on and on. For Nature's laws cannot be violated, and Nature knows no favoritism and no partiality. Some time or other you have to begin, and the sooner you begin the sooner will you succeed."

Now the whole of this, you will remark, is the training, the organising of *bodies*. And psychism implies that. You must train, purify, organise, in order that the powers of the consciousness may show forth. You will see very fully now why at the beginning I urged you to realise that the whole of these manifestations are similar in kind, so that when you find someone saying to you: "Oh! So-and-so is a psychic," as though that were to condemn the person; "Such-and-such a person is a mere clairvoyant," and so on, as though the fact of possessing clairvoyance were a disadvantage rather than an advantage; then the proper answer is: "Are you prepared to go the whole way with that?" Many Indians do so (it is the point to which I said I would return); they say that the siddhis, the powers of consciousness manifested on the lower planes, are hindrances to the spiritual life. And so they are in a sense. The spiritual life goes in-

wards: all psychic powers go outwards. It is the same Self in either case—the Self turning inwards on Itself, or the Self going outwards to the world of objects. But it does not make one scrap of difference whether it goes out to physical, astral, or mental objects: it is all the objective consciousness, and therefore the very reverse of the spiritual. But the Indian does not shrink from that as ordinarily the man in the West does. He is perfectly honest. He says: "Yes, the powers of the intellect applied to the objects of the world are a hindrance in the spiritual life. We do not want them, do not care to think about it. We give up all the objects of the physical plane when seeking the Self." And if you are prepared to say that, then by all means turn aside from psychism, but do not at one and the same time encourage intellectuality on the physical plane and denounce what you call psychism on the others, because that is mere folly. If it is better to be blind here than to see—and the Indian will tell you it often is, because it shuts out all the distracting objects of the physical plane—if you are prepared to say that, and say: "Yes, I would rather be blind than see," then you may go on to denounce seeing on the astral plane. But if you value your physical sight, why not value the astral sight—it is a stage higher—as well? and the mental sight—which is a stage higher yet—as well? Why denounce astral and mental, and praise up the physical? Why admire the power of sight of the painter, who sees more shades than you can see, and denounce the sight of the clairvoyant, who sees very much more than the cleverest painter? They all belong to the object world; they all lead the Self away from the realisation

of himself, and they are all exactly on the same level. It seems strange when one sees the same person exalting the psychic on the physical plane and denouncing it on the astral and mental.

But now let us turn to "spirituality" and see what that means. "The Self-realisation of the One"; not the declaring that all men are one, that all men are brothers: we can all do that. Anyone who has reached a certain stage of intellectual knowledge will recognise the unity of mankind; will say, with the writer in the Christian book, that God has made all men of one blood—quoted again from what is called a Pagan book. That intellectual recognition of the unity is practically universal among educated people; but very few are prepared to carry out the intellectual recognition into practical life and practical training. Now for the development of what are called psychic faculties some amount of retirement from the world is very useful. For the development of the spiritual consciousness no such retirement is necessary. In fact, for the most part, except in the earlier stages perhaps, seclusion is a mistake; for the world is the best place for the unfolding of the sense of unity, and best amongst men and women and children can we call out the powers of the spiritual life. And that for a simple reason. In the lower world the Spirit shows itself out by love, by sympathy; and the more we can love, the more we can sympathise, the greater will be the unfolding of the consciousness of the Self within. It was a true word of the early Christian Initiate, that if a man loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen? And if the perfection of the spiritual

consciousness be that vision of the Supreme, the consciousness which knows itself to be one with God, then the way to the realisation will be by the partial realisation of loving sympathy, for which the world is the most fitting field, and our brethren around us the natural stimulus. Love, sacrifice, these are the manifestations of the Spirit on the physical plane, as is right knowledge also. For the Spirit is not a one-sided thing, but a Trinity, and knowledge is as necessary as love. The special value of love lies in its unifying power, and in the fact that it makes what the world calls sacrifice natural and delightful. You know it in your own experience. Just in proportion as you love another is it a joy and not a sorrow to give up things in order that the happiness of the other may be increased. It is no sacrifice for a mother to give up personal enjoyment for the sake of giving it to her children. A deeper joy is felt in the happiness of the child than could possibly have been felt in the enjoyment of the thing by herself; a sweeter, finer, profounder happiness is the enjoyment of the happiness of the beloved. And that a little widens out the consciousness, and hence family life is one of the best schools for spiritual unfolding; for in the continual sacrifices of the family life, springing from love and rendered joyful by affection, the Self feels itself a larger Self, and reaches the sense of unity with those immediately around. And after the family the public life, the life of the community, the life of the nation: these also are schools for the unfolding of the spiritual consciousness. For the man who is a good citizen of the community feels the life of the community as his own life, and so

becomes conscious of a larger Self than the narrow self of the family. And the man who loves his nation, his Self widens out to the boundaries of the nation, and he is conscious of a larger Self than the self of the family, or the community within the State. And just in proportion as the love widening does not grow superficial and shallow (for if you have only a certain amount of water and you make your dish wider and wider, the water will become shallower and shallower) does it approach spiritual love. Too often love becomes unreal with those who try to love the far-off when they do not love the near. But if you avoid the temptation, and remembering that the Spirit has no limitations, and that you can draw and draw and draw on the love within you and never find the bottom of the source of love; if you are strong enough to do that, then the love of the family, of the community, of the State, will widen out into the love of humanity, and you shall know yourself as one with all, and not only with your family, or your community, or your nation. All these local loves are schoolmasters to bring us to the wider love of man. But do not blunder in the idea that you can have the wider unless you have gone through the narrower; for the bad husband, the bad citizen, the bad patriot, will never make a real lover of humanity. He must learn his alphabet before he can read in this book of love, and must spell out the letters before he may pronounce the word. None the less, these successive stages are all stages towards the spiritual life, and prepare the man for the consciously spiritual realisation. And if you would really train yourself for the unfolding of this life

within you, practise it on those who are nearest to you by meeting them with love and sympathy in the daily paths of life. Not only those whom you like, but those you care not for as well; not with those who love you only, but with those who dislike you also. Remember that you have to break down barriers—barriers of the bodies that bar you out from your fellow Selves in the worlds around you, and that breaking down of the barriers is part of the training in the spiritual life. Only as barrier after barrier is broken down, only as wall after wall is levelled to the ground, will the freedom of the Spirit become possible in manifestation on every plane and in every world. The Spirit is ever free in his own nature and his own life, but, confined within the barriers of the body, he has to learn to transcend them, before, on these planes of matter, he can realise the divine freedom which is his eternal birthright. So long as you feel yourself separate from others, so long are you shut out from the realisation of the unity; so long as you say "my" and "mine," so long the realisation of the Spirit is not yet possible for you. Love of individual possessions, not only physical but moral and mental, not the vulgar pride of physical wealth only, but moral pride, intellectual pride, everything that says "I" as against "you," and does not realise that I and you are one—all this is against the spiritual life. Hardest of all lessons when brought down to practical life; most difficult of all attainments when effort is made to realise it, and not only to talk about it and imagine it. It is best practised by continual renunciation of the individual possessions on every plane, and the constant thought of unity.

When you are trying to live the life of the Spirit, you will try to be pure. You do well, but why? In order that you may be pure, and leave your impure brethren in their impurity? Oh no! You must try to be pure, in order that there may be more purity in the world to share amongst all men, because you are pure. You are not wanting to be purer than others, but only gathering purity that you may spread it in every direction, and most joyous when your own purity lifts someone from the mire, who is trampled into it under the feet of the world. You want to be wise. You do well; for wisdom is a splendid possession. But why? In order that you may look down on the ignorant and say: "I am wiser than thou," as the pure man might say: "I am holier than thou"? Oh no! but in order that the wisdom that you gather may enlighten the ignorant, and become theirs and not only yours. Otherwise it is no spiritual thing; for spirituality does not know "myself" and "others"; it only knows the One Self, of whom all forms are manifestations.

We dare not call ourselves spiritual until we have reached that point which none of us as yet has reached, for to reach it means to become a Christ. When, looking at the lowest and basest and most ignorant and vilest, we can say: "That is myself, in such-and-such a garb," and say it feeling it, rejoicing in it—because if there are two of you, and one is pure and the other impure, and the two are one, then neither is perfect, but both are raised above the level of the lowest—that is the true atonement, the real work of the Christ; and the birth of Christ within you means the willingness to throw down

all walls of separation, and the stature of Christ within you means that you have accomplished it.

For the most part we claim our unity above; we do not take pride in claiming our unity below; we are glad to say, "Yes, I also am Divine; I am a Christ in the making; I am one with Him." Harder to say: "I am one with the lowest of my brethren, sharing with them the same Divine life." Yet our Divinity is only realised as we recognise that same Divinity in others. You may remember that exquisite story of Olive Schreiner, breathing the very essence first of the unspiritual, and then of the spiritual life. In the first case a woman, pure and spotless, her garments shining with whiteness, and her feet shod as with snow, went up to the Gates of Heaven and trod the golden streets. And as she trod them in her shining robes the angels shuddered back, and said: "See, her garments are blood-spotted, and her sandals are stained with mire and blood." From the throne the Christ asked: "Daughter, how is it that your garments are blood-spotted and your sandals stained?" And she answered: "Lord, I was walking in miry ways, and I saw a woman there down in the mire, and I stepped upon her that I might keep my sandals clean." The Christ and the angels vanished, and the woman fell from heaven, and wandered again in the miry ways of earth. Once again she came to the heavenly portal and trod the golden streets, and this time she was not alone. Another woman was with her, and the garments of both were blood-flecked, and the sandals of both were stained with the mire and blood of earth. But the angels seeing them pass by, cried out: "See how whitely their garments

shine! And see how white are their feet!" And the Christ, when they came before the throne, said: "How come ye here in garments that are soiled?" And the answer came: "I saw this my sister trampled upon, and I bent down to lift her up, and in the picking of her up my garments were soiled, but I have brought her with me to Thy presence." And the Christ smiled and lifted them up beside Him, and the angels sang for joy. For it is not the sin and the shame that are shared that soil the garments of the Spirit, and leave upon it the mire of earth.

If, then, you would lead the spiritual life, go downwards as well as upwards. Feel your unity with the sinner as well as with the saint. For the only thing that makes you divine is the Spirit that lives in every human heart alike, in all equally dwelling, and there is no difference in the divinity of the Spirit, but only in the stage of its manifestation. And just as you and I climb upwards and show more of the spiritual life in the lower worlds, should we raise our brethren with us, and know the joy of the redeemer, and the power of the life that saves. For Those whom we call Masters, Those who are the Christs of the world, Those are reverenced and beloved, because to Them there is no difference, but the sinner is as beloved as the saint—nay, sometimes more, because compassion flows out to the weaker more than to the strong.

Such is the spiritual life, such the goal that every man who would become spiritual must place before his eyes. Very different from the psychic, and not to be confused with it—the unfolding of the divinity in man, and not

the purification and the organisation of the vehicles. Both are good, both necessary, and I finish with the words with which I began, that while to be psychic is no proof of spirituality, to be spiritual is to possess every power in heaven and on earth. Choose ye each your road. Tread whichever you will, but beware that by the growth of your powers here, in separation, you do not delay the growth of the spirituality which is the realisation of the unity of the Self. For everything which divides becomes evil, by the very fact of its dividing; every power which is shared is a wing to carry us upwards, but every power that is kept for the lower self is a clog that holds us down to earth.

The Place of Masters in Religions

EVERYONE of us who belongs to any special religion can trace back along the line of his religion further and further into the past, until he comes to its beginning, its first Teacher. And round that Teacher is usually a group of men and women who to the Founder of the religion are disciples, but to those who accept the religion later are teachers, apostles. And this is invariably true. The Hebrew, if you ask him, will trace back his religion to the time of the great legislator Moses, and behind Him to a yet more heroic figure, Abraham, the "friend of God." Look back to some yet older faith, the faith of Egypt, of Chaldea, of Persia, of China, of India, and you will find exactly the same thing is true. The Parsî, representative of a splendid tradition, but whose religion, as it is now, is, as has been well said, "a religion of fragments" only—he will trace back his religion to his own great Prophet, the Prophet of the Fire, who led the exodus from the centre of Asia and guided His people into what we now call the land of Persia. Egypt, if you ask her story, will show you heroic figures of her past, and amongst them that great King and Priest, Osiris, who, slain, as the old legend tells us, rises again, as Lord and

Judge of His people. Buḍḍhism, spread in the far East, will trace back its story to the Buḍḍha, and will declare in addition to that, that not only is the Buḍḍha the Teacher of that particular faith, but that a living person still exists on the earth as Teacher, as Protector, whom they call the Boḍhisaṭṭva, the wise and the pure. India will tell you of a great group of teachers gathered round their Manu, the tradition of whose laws is still preserved, and is still used as the basis of the social legislation administered now by the English rulers. And round that great Lawgiver of the past, wise men are gathered whose names are known throughout the land, each of them standing at the head of some noble Indian family, that traces its ancestry backward and backward till it ends in the Sage, the Teacher. And this is equally true of more modern religions. Take the Christian religion, and the Christian traces his religion back until it finds its source in the personality of the Prophet of Judea, of Jesus the Christ. And it is interesting, as one of those strange parallels which meet us often in the comparative study of religions, that just as the Buḍḍhist has his Buḍḍha and also his Boḍhisaṭṭva, so the Christian has the two names: Christ, representing the living Spirit, a stage in the spiritual unfolding, the name representing a stage, an office, rather than a special man, and joined to that the individual name of Jesus, in order to mark the intimate connection, as some would say the identity, between the two. But just as among the Buḍḍhists the distinction is drawn, so among the early Christians you will find a similar distinction was made between the man Jesus and the spiritual Christ.

So that in those early days many of those who were called "Gnostics" divided the two in a similar fashion, although uniting them at a certain stage of the teaching, of the ministry. And if you take the latest born of the religions, the Mussulmân, the religion of Islâm, that again is traced backward to a Prophet, the Prophet Muhammaḍ, the great Prophet of Arabia. Universally this is true, that the religion traces itself back to a single mighty figure, whom some call a "God-man," a man too divine to be regarded as wholly like those amongst whom he lived and moved and taught; above them and yet of them, closely bound to them by a common humanity, although raised above them by a manifestation of the God within, mightier, more complete, more compelling, than the manifestation in the ordinary men and women around Him. So with all religions, and in that thought of the divine figure, the Founder of every faith, you have the fullest, the truest, the most perfect conception of that which we Theosophists call the ideal of the Master. All such mighty beings by the Theosophist would be given the name of Master. And not by the Theosophist alone, for that word in other religions has been applied to the Founder, the Chief of the faith. Nay, to the Christian it should come with special force, with special significance, for it was the name that Christ the Teacher chose as best expressing His own relationship to those who believed on Him, to those who followed Him. "Neither be ye called masters," He said; "for one is your Master, even Christ." And so again you may remember that, in speaking to His disciples, He said: "Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well,

for so I am." So that to the Christian heart the name Master should be above all other names sacred and beloved, since it was the chosen name of their own Teacher, the name that He claimed from His disciples, that name that He used as representing His relation to them. So this idea of a Master in religion certainly should be one which comes with no alien sound, no foreign significance, among those who look up to the Master Christ. And exactly the same idea is that of a Master in any great religion; it is a common idea—it signifies the Founder, the Teacher, divine and yet human. To that point I will return later.

Let us study the central idea of these Masters a little more closely, and see what are the special characteristics which mark Them in the religions of the past. If you go back very, very far, you will always find that the Master wears a double character: ruler, law-giver, on the one side; teacher upon the other. In all the old civilisations this is characteristic; for in those days the idea had not arisen of sacred and secular, or sacred and profane, as we say in the modern world. To the old civilisations there was no such thing as sacred history and profane history; no division was made between sacred science and secular science; all history was sacred, all science was divine. And so much was that the case that, when you find an ancient pupil asking of an ancient teacher as to divine science, the answer was given: "There are two forms of divine science, the higher and the lower." And the lower divine science was made up of all the things that now you call literature, science, and art; all those were run over by name, and summed up under the

heading of the lower divine science. The higher, supreme Science was that knowledge of God, to which accurately the word Wisdom ought only to be applied. So that to their thought Deity was everywhere, and there was only variety in the manifestations of Deity. All Nature was sacred. God expressed Himself in every object, in every form. All that could be said was that through one form more of His glory came than through another. The form might be more or less transparent, but the inner radiant light was the same in all. And it was natural, inevitable, with such a conception of Nature and of God, that the Master, the Founder, of a religion should unite in His sole person the office alike of the Priest and of the King. And so you find it. The only likeness in modern days is not now a very fortunate one in the eyes of many—the King-Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church. For so ill had the duties of the King been performed in that high seat, that the people lost the sense of the divinity, and revolted against it, and cast it off, and left that Pontiff shorn of his royal character. But far back in the old civilisations, in the one person the two offices were united. The Pharaoh of Egypt was truly the Lord of the triple diadem, but also the supreme Priest in every temple of his land. So also in Chaldea, in India, and in many another land; and wherever that is the case you find a certain outline given to the civilisation, differing in detail, but marvellously similar in the broad touches of that sketch. You find that in those days the Priest-King, the Ruler of the land and the supreme Teacher of his people, shaped the polity of the nation as he shaped the doctrines taught in the

temples of the religion. Both the religion and the polity have the keynote of duty. And always with increasing power there came greater weight of responsibility, heavier burden of duty; and the freest in those civilisations were the poorest. Those who were regarded as the children of the national household were ever cared for with extremest care. The very fact that they were the lowest in development gave them the greatest claim on the divine Man who ruled, so that all through the note of those civilisations is the note which to-day would be called socialistic—with one enormous difference, that the most wise ruled. The result, in a sense, would be the result that the Socialist dreams of, the absence of poverty, the universality of some form of work done for the State as a whole, a duty of each man to bear a share of the burden; but the burden grew lighter and lighter as it came downwards to the younger members of the family, of the nation; the duty the most burdensome was placed on the highest. And you will find that, while still the tradition remained, it was very difficult sometimes to get rulers and governors of large States and small. It comes out in the Chinese books. The Emperor sends down word that So-and-so is to be governor of a State, and So-and-so, in those degenerate days, generally tried to escape from it, because of the tremendous burden that the governorship imposed. For in the case of the old Rulers, in the days when the divine Kings were the Kings and Priests of the people, anything that was wrong in the nation was related to the Ruler, and not to the people at large. Remember the words of one great Teacher of later days, Confucius, when a King turned to

him and said: "Master, why is there robbery, why is there murder in my land? How shall I stop it?" His stern answer was: "If you, O King, did not steal and murder, there would be no robbery and no murder in your land." Always the highest with the weight of responsibility; the younger with the right to enjoy, to be happy, to be cared for. Where food was short, they were the last to starve, and the King the first; where anything went short of material things, they were the first to be given their share, and the King the last. Such was the outline of the social organisation. Slight traces of it remain even to the present day. You can see traces of it in the civilisation that was destroyed in Peru by the conquerors, the Spanish conquerors, of that land. Some traces of it still remain in India, although degraded and decayed. The note is always the same: the higher, the more burdened; the higher, the harder the life; the higher, the greater the duty. For that is the type of the Master, and the idea ran through the whole of the civilisation. He, the Priest-King, mighty in knowledge and in power, must bear upon his broad shoulders the burden that would crush a weaker man. And so downwards through all the degrees of ruler, in proportion to the power and its expansion, so in proportion the weight and the responsibility.

They passed away from earth as humanity grew out of its infant stage. My phrase is too strong—I should not have said: "They passed away from earth." They passed away into silence, not from earth; thereon many of Them still remain. But They drew back from the outer position, from outer power, and became the great

company of Elder Brothers of humanity, only some of whom remained in close touch with the race.

And that is the next point in the idea of the Master. Those who founded a religion were bound to remain wearing the body of man, fixed to the earth, bound to the outward semblance of humanity, so long as the religion lived upon earth which They had given to it. That was the rule: no liberation for the Man who founded a religion until all who belonged to that religion had themselves passed out of it, into liberation, or into another faith, and the religion was dead. The death of a religion is the liberation from all bondage of the Master who gave it to the world. He in a very real sense is incarnate in the religion that He bestows. While that religion lives and teaches, while men still find in it the expression of their thought, so long that divine Man must remain, and guide and protect and help the religion which He gave to earth. Such is the law. No Master may leave our humanity while that which He started as a human school is still existing upon earth. Some have passed away, and would no longer be spoken of as Masters—the name given to Them in the occult world is different—but Those who have passed away have passed away because Their religions are dead: the Masters of ancient Egypt, of ancient Chaldea, have gone from this earth into the mighty company of Those who no longer bear the burden of the flesh. But the Masters of every living religion live on earth, and are the links, for the people of that religion, between God and man; the Master is the divine Man, one with his brothers, who look to him for help, one with the God around and

above, and through Him the spiritual life is ever flowing. The word "mediator," applied in the Christian scriptures to the Christ, signifies a real and living relation. There are such mediators between God and man, and they are all God-men, true Christs. Such links between the God without and the God within us are necesssary for the helping by the one, and for the manifestation of the other. The God within us, unfolding his powers, answers to the God without us, and the link is the God-man who shares the manifested nature of divinity, and yet remains one with His brethren in the flesh. A bondage, yes. But a voluntary bondage—a bondage assumed in the day in which the Messenger came forth from the great White Lodge to bring a new revelation, to found a new divine kingdom upon earth. Heavy the responsibility of a divine Man who takes upon Himself the tremendous burden of speaking out to the world a new Word in the divine revelation. All that grows out of it makes the heavy burden of His destiny. Everything which happens within that communion of which He is the centre must react upon Him, and He is ultimately responsible; and as that divine Word is always spoken in a community of men and women imperfect, sinning, ignorant, that Word is bound to be distorted and twisted, because of the medium in which it works. That is why every such Teacher is called a "sacrifice"—Himself at once the sacrificer and the sacrifice, the greatest sacrifice that man may make to man, a sacrifice so mighty that none in whom Deity is not unfolded to the greatest height compatible with human limitation is strong enough to make it, is strong enough to endure it. That is the true

sacrifice of the Christ; not a few hours' agony in dying, but century after century of crucifixion on the cross of matter, until salvation has been won for the people who bear His name, or until they have passed under some other Lord. Hence is that road always called "the Way of the Cross." Long before Christianity came to birth, the "Way of the Cross" was known to every Initiate, and Those were said to tread it who volunteered for the mighty service of proclaiming the old message again in the ears of the world of the time. A sacrifice: for none may tell, who volunteers for the service, what lies before the religion that He founds, what shall be the deeds of the community that He begins on earth. And every sin and crime of that religion, or that Church, falls into the scales of Karma stamped with the name of the Founder. He is responsible for it, and bearing that responsibility is the mighty sacrifice He makes; and the result is inevitable; for in a world imperfect no perfection can be perfectly mirrored. As the sun-ray falling upon water is twisted and distorted, so is it with the rays of a perfect truth falling in amongst a community of imperfect men; and no action down here can be a perfect action, for "action," it is written in an ancient book, "is surrounded with evil as a fire is surrounded with smoke." The imperfection of the medium makes the smoke round every Word of Fire, every Word of Truth. And the Founder must endure the pungency of the smoke, if He would speak the Word of Fire. The realisation of that, however dimly, however imperfectly, makes the passion of gratitude in the human heart to those Men who bear their infirmities and open up the way to God for man.

It is that which in some forms of popular Christianity has been distorted in speaking of the sacrifice of the Christ, when it has been made a sacrifice, not for man, sinful and foolish, but to the Father of all perfection, who needs no sacrifice of suffering in order to reconcile Him to the children sprung from His life. That is one of the distortions of the ignorance of man; that the falsification which has been spoken in the name of religion and has obscured the perfect love of God—for every divine Man who comes out is a manifestation of the divine heart, and a revelation of God to man. And how could it be that the Master of Compassion, who wins human hearts by the tenderness of His love, could be a Revealer of God, if there were not in God a compassion mightier than His own, and profounder than His humanity, as God is greater than man? But the splendor of the truth dazzled the eyes of those to whom it was presented, and their own ignorance, and fear, and limitation, imposed upon that perfect sacrifice the terrible aspect of a sacrifice to God—an aspect which it assumed, not only in Christianity, but in other faiths as well. For the most part, not always, in the elder religions they understood that the story of the life and death was an allegory, a "myth," as they called it, revealing a deeper truth. And so they avoided the pain and the sense of revulsion which has roused the conscience of civilised man to revolt against the cruder presentments of the doctrine; the great truth of the sacrifice is true, but it is not a legal, a contract, sacrifice, made between man's representative and God; but the effort of the divine to make itself understood, and the voluntary binding of the sacrifice to the

cross of matter until His people are set free. And then, as I said, He passes on into other worlds, to other work, and is no longer called a Master of the WISDOM.

Now, looking at this idea, let us ask: "What is the work of these Masters in the religions of the world, and why is it that this thought of the Masters has been so revived in the modern world, and made so much more living, in a sense, than it has been for many a long year?" In the early days of Christianity, as I said, you find the idea; but it has largely vanished from the Churches as a living truth, and they think of Jesus, the Christian Master, as risen from the dead and ascended into heaven. And the materialising spirit of ignorance has made the ascent a going away, and the Man has gone, although the God remains. But that is only a materialisation of the older truth; for, according to the truth, heaven is not a far-away place to which people go. No one *goes* there; they only open their eyes and see it on every side around them. For heaven is a state of the psychic life which is realised in the higher bodies, the bodies of the mental plane, and it does not need to go hither and thither, North, South, East, or West, to find it; for, as the great Teacher said: "Behold, the Kingdom of Heaven is within you"—not far away, beyond the sun or moon or stars. And the ascension of Jesus to heaven, as the Church of England puts it—in words that sound very strange in modern ears, because they have lost their mystic meaning and are only taken in what S. Paul used to call the "carnal" interpretation—in the fourth article of the Church of England, was that He ascended into heaven, taking with Him His "flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the

perfection of man's nature." Now when you take that in the literal and crude signification, naturally the thoughtful man revolts against it. What is this about a physical body and physical bones going up through the air into the sky? And where has it gone to? The modern man cannot believe it in that sense, and so he loses the spiritual verity enshrined in words of symbolism and of allegory. For the fact that Jesus the Master went away, but still dwells on earth in the flesh, that is the truth which the article tries to indicate; and not that He is gone far away into a far-off heaven to sit at the right hand of God, whence He shall come again to judge. He lives in the body, and also lives in the midst of the Church, which is His true mystical body; and so long as that Church exists, so long as that Church is found on earth, so long its Master shall live within it, and shall dwell in a human body. He is not gone away, He has not ascended anywhere in the literal sense, but is permeating the whole of His Communion, and living upon earth until the last Christian has passed away to liberation, or is born into some other faith. That is the inner meaning. He lives and may be reached. And if the teachings of the Theosophical Society have any value for the Christian Church, it is because they are bringing back to live in Christian hearts this living truth of the bodily ever-presence of the Christ amongst them. Theosphists who are Christians, and remain within the limits of the Christian Church, have gained a vivid view of this real humanity of Jesus. They learn that He may be reached as truly now as when He walked near the sea of Galilee, or taught in the streets of Jerusalem, that they may

know Him with as real a sense of His presence, may learn from Him as truly as any apostle or disciple in the past, that it is a living and real presence—not only, as the Roman Catholic Church says, in the Sacrament of the altar, but in the experience of the Christian heart. And it has never been left without a witness. Look all through the history of the Christian Church, and see how one after another has come into living touch with the Master Jesus. Every great saint has proclaimed his own experience as regards his contact with his Lord. And only in comparatively modern days, and in parts only of the Christian Church, has that great and vivifying truth been lost sight of. The Greek Church has never lost it; the Roman Catholic Church has never lost it. The testimony of the saints in those ancient communions bears witness to the continuing connection between the Christian and the Christ. You find it in some of the extreme Protestant communities also, where they bear a living testimony to the reality of the personal communion. Not through books and churches only, but within the living heart of man, visible sometimes even to physical eyes, shining out in the vision of the saint, speaking in the rapture of the prophet—it has never quite passed away from Christianity. It is coming back more strongly year after year, coming back with increased vitality, with more reality and strength behind it; coming back because the Christ within the Church, finding that forgetfulness was coming over the modern mind, has, as in the olden days, used a scourge of whipcord instead of only the voice of love. For inasmuch as the voice of love was not listened to, and the reality of His presence

was being forgotten, He has used the whip of what is called the Higher Criticism to drive men out of books back to the living Master of the Christian faith. When you build the house of your faith on books and manuscripts, on councils and traditions, you are building on the sand, and the storm has come—the storm of criticism, of investigation, of scholarship, and the house of faith totters, because it is founded on the sand. But build the house of your faith on the rock of human experience, on the one rock on which every true Church is founded, the individual touch between the human Spirit and the divine, the personal experience of the human man on earth with the divine Man in the heaven, beside and around him, and you build the house of your faith on a rock that nothing can shake nor destroy, and it will shelter you, no matter what storms may rage outside. And so, as in the temple, the whip has been used in order that men may learn what they would not learn by the gentle instruction spoken only in the words of the friend. The enemy has been used for it, the foe, the assailant, who has made sharp his weapons, and has cut many of the old manuscripts in pieces; and the result of that is that the Christian Church is thrown back upon the Christ Himself, no longer seen dimly through history, but in vivid reality before the eyes of the heart of the Christian, and that He will give to Christianity a new life. The mystic belief will come back, and the literal interpretations will fall away. And when that is done, then Christianity shall have renewed its youth and its power, and shall know that the Master is living in His Church, and is still the Master of life and death, as in the olden days.

And by a very real instinct you will find that the most earnest Christians cling to the humanity of Jesus, and that is the value of the Master to us, when inside our hearts is written the truth of His existence. If there were only such men as we, and God, the gulf would be too vast, the difference too terrible—nothing to encourage us to believe that Divinity was within us. We seem so trivial, so foolish, so childish, that we hardly dare sometimes to believe that we are truly God. It seems impossible for us in our modern life, with all the follies in which we spend ourselves, with all the childish ambitions and terrors with which we amuse or frighten ourselves. This little modern life seems so petty and so vulgar that we scarcely dare to believe ourselves divine. We speak of the old heroic days, and think that if we had lived then, we too should have been heroic, as the heroes and martyrs and saints of earlier times. But in truth humanity is just as divine to-day, as it ever was in the past. And if the divine were manifested in us as it was in the great ones of the past, we should be heroic as they were; it is not circumstances that make the difference, but only that the God within us is more in the stage of childhood than in those mighty ones of the past, in which He had risen to the stature of divine manhood. And when we think of the Masters and realise that They are; still more, perhaps, when in some happy moment we catch a glimpse of such divine Men, or feel Their presence closer than that of a human friend, ah! then it is that the inspiration which flows from Them, as from a ceaseless source, encourages and vivifies the life within. For we realise that it was not so very, very long ago that

They were as we are, plunged down in the trivialities of earth; that They have climbed above them by the unfolding of the God within. And what They have done, you and I may also do. They are a constant inspiration and encouragement for humanity. They are men, and only God as we are God; the only difference being that They have God more manifest in Them than He is in us. They also in Their day were weak and foolish; They also strove and struggled, as we strive and struggle now: They also failed, as we are failing now; They also blundered, as we are blundering now; and They have risen above it all, strength after strength revealed in Them, wisdom and power and love growing ever more and more divine. And what They have done, you and I can do. For They are truly but the firstfruits of humanity, the promise of the harvest, and not something strange, miraculous, and far away. The Christian clings to the manhood of Jesus for the reason that as "He hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." And it is a true instinct, a wise faith, for it is by coming into touch with such links between humanity and God, that you and I in time will become divine. In Him that divine seed of Spirit has unfolded into flower and fruit. When you sow a seed in the soil of your garden, you sow it in the full belief that it will grow, that it will become a plant with leaf and flower and fruit. And you believe it by all the promise of the past, which has proved that out of such seeds grow such flowers; all that is behind you to make your faith a reasonable faith; and when you plant that trivial thing, a little larger than a pin's head, and

hide it in the darkness of the ground out of sight, you have a living faith within you that out of that seed shall grow the perfect flower. Have the same faith for the seed of divinity that is planted within you, though it be planted in the darkness of your heart. Even if at present the first little shoot has not come up above the darkness of the soil in which it is buried, none the less the seed is there; it will grow and ripen into the perfect fruit. It must be so. There are no failures for the divine Husbandman, no seed which is not living, which falls from His hands into the ground. And near us the Masters stand ever, the living truth of what man can be —nay, what he shall be in the centuries to come. They are proofs of what you and I shall be, the finished copies of the statues which lie as yet so rough, so unhewn, in the marble of our humanity. That is Their value for all men, and part of Their work is to help us to become what They are, to foster in us every shoot of the spiritual life, to strengthen in us every effort and struggle towards the light. Theirs the glorious work, not only of building up mighty faiths, but of living in them, and pouring out spiritual life on the heart of each who enters within the portals of those faiths. That is Their splendid work; and if Theosophy is doing much in all the religions of the world to make them more real to their adherents, and give to them fresh vitality and strength and vigor, it is only because it is the latest impulse from the Masters of the WISDOM, and so is the most convenient channel through which that life may be poured into all the religions of the world. Only the latest of the impulses. All religions have been born out of such an

impulse, and the only difference between this and the earlier impulses is that while they each founded a religion and round that religion a wall was built, so that there were believers inside the wall and unbelievers outside, round this spiritual forthstreaming no walls are to be built, but the waters are to spread everywhere without limitation, without exception. That is the specialty in the message of Theosophy. It belongs to all alike. As much yours, though you do not call it by that name, perhaps, as it is theirs who call it by that name. It is only living, because it lives in every religion; it is only true, because it comes from the same Masters of the eternal WISDOM, belongs equally to all, to every religion that cares to take any of the truth that it has re-proclaimed. And all over the world the glad message is going. There is not one religion which is now living, amongst whose adherents Theosophy is not spreading, and making them better members of their religions than they were before. For there is many a man and woman, in East and West alike, who had gone away from the religion into which they were born, because the mystic element had vanished and the literal sense of the doctrines was in truth the letter which killeth, while the spirit that was life seemed to have escaped. Many such men and women, in East and West, have come back with joy to the religion in which they were born, in realising that it is only an expression of the one divine WISDOM, and that the Masters of the WISDOM live and move amongst us.

And it may be that if the world grows more spiritual, it may be that if Spirit again becomes triumphant over matter, after passing through the darkness which was

necessary in order that the intellect might be thoroughly developed and might learn its powers and its limitations; it may be that, in days to come, when the world is more spiritualised than to-day, climbing as it is again the upward arc, these living Masters of the world's religions will come amongst us again visibly as in the earlier days. It is not They who keep back in silence. It is we who shut Them out, and make Their presence a danger rather than an encouragement and an inspiration. And every one of you—no matter what your faith may be, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Theosophist, what matters it?—every one of you who makes the Master of your own faith a living reality, part of your life, nearer than friend and brother, every such believer and worker is hastening the day of joy when the world shall be ready for the open reception of the Masters, that They may move visibly amongst humanity once more. That it may be so, open your heart to every breath of truth; that it may be so, open your eyes to every ray from the one eternal Sun. In the past the world would have none of the Masters. They slew the Christ; they made the prophets outcasts. And until in our heart the love of the Master awakens, until with passionate longing, with continual insistence, we call to the divine Men the welcome, without which They may not come, They must remain hidden. Only when there comes up from heart after heart one vast chant of devotion and appeal, only then will They come to the many as They have already come to the few, and show out the visible splendor of Their manhood, as the glory of Their divinity has ever been upon the earth.

Theosophy and the Theosophical Society

I WANT to put before you clearly and plainly what Theosophy means, and what is the function of the Theosophical Society. For we notice very often, especially with regard to the Society, that there is a good deal of misconception touching it, and that people do not realise the object with which it exists, the work that it is intended to perform. It is very often looked upon as the expression of some new religion, as though people in becoming Theosophists must leave the religious community to which he or she may happen to belong. And so a profound misconception arises, and many people imagine that in some way or other it is hostile to the religion which they profess. Now Theosophy, looked at historically or practically, belongs to all the religions of the world, and every religion has an equal claim to it, has an equal right to say that Theosophy exists within it. For Theosophy, as the name implies, the Divine WISDOM, the WISDOM of God, clearly cannot be appropriated by any body of people, by any Society, not even by the greatest of the religions of the world. It is a common

property, as free to everyone as the sunlight and the air. No one can claim it as his, save by virtue of his common humanity; no one can deny it to his brother, save at the peril of destroying his own claim thereto. Now the meaning of this word, both historically and practically, the WISDOM, the Divine WISDOM, is a very definite and clear meaning; it asserts the possibility of the knowledge of God. That is the point that the student ought to grasp; this knowledge of God, not the belief in Him, not the faith in Him, not only vague idea concerning Him, but the *knowledge* of Him, is possible to man. That is the affirmation of Theosophy, that is its root-meaning and its essence.

And we find, looking back historically, that this has been asserted in the various great religions of the world. They all claim that man can know, not only that man can believe. Only in some of the more modern faiths, in their own modern days, the knowledge has slipped into the background, and the belief, the faith, looms very large in the mind of the believer. Go back as far as you will in the history of the past, and you will find the most ancient of religions affirming this possibility of knowledge. In India, for instance, with its antique civilisation, you find that the very central idea of Hinḍuism is this supreme knowledge, the knowledge of God. As I pointed out to you the other day with regard to this old Eastern religion, all knowledge is regarded in a higher or a lower degree as the knowledge of God; for there is no division, as you know, in that ancient faith, between the secular and the sacred. That division is a modern division, and was unknown in the

ancient world. But they did make a division in knowledge between the higher and the lower; and the lower knowledge, or the lower science, called the "lower divine science," was that which you will call "science" nowadays, the study of the external world. But it also included all that here we speak of as Literature, as Art, as Craft—everything, in fact, which the human brain can study and the human fingers can accomplish—the whole of that, in one grand generalisation, was called "Divine Wisdom," but it was the lower divine Wisdom, the inferior knowledge of God. Then, beside, or rather above that, came the Supreme Knowledge, the higher, the superior, that beyond which there was no knowledge, which was the crown of all. Now, that supreme knowledge is declared to be "the knowledge of Him by Whom all things are known"—a phrase indicating the Supreme Deity. It was that which was called the supreme knowledge, or, *par excellence*, the Divine Knowledge, and that old Hindu thought is exactly the same as you have indicated by the name Theosophy.

So, again, classical students may remember that among the Greeks and the early Christians there was what was called the Gnosis, the knowledge, the definite article pointing to that which, above all else, was to be regarded as knowledge or wisdom. And when you find among the Neo-Platonists this word Gnosis used, it always means, and is defined to mean, "the knowledge of God," and the "Gnostic" is "a man who knows God." So, again, among the early Christians. Take such a man as Origen. He uses the same word in exactly the same sense; for when Origen is declaring that the Church has

medicine for the sinner, and that Christ is the Good Physician who heals the diseases of men, he goes on to say that the Church has also the Gnosis for the wise, and that you cannot build the Church out of sinners; you must build it out of Gnostics. These are the men who know, who have the power to help and to teach; and there can be no medicine for the diseased, no upholder of the weak, unless, within the limits of the religion, the Gnostic is to be found. And so Origen lays immense stress on the Gnostic, and devotes page after page to a description of him: what he is, what he thinks, what he does; and to the mind of that great Christian teacher, the Gnostic was the strength of the Church, the pillar, the buttress of the faith. And so, coming down through the centuries, since the Christian time, you will find the word Gnostic used every now and again, but more often the term "Theosophist" and "Theosophy"; for this term came into use in the later school, the Neo-Platonists, and became the commonly accepted word for those who claimed this possibility of knowledge, or even claimed to *know*. And a phrase regarding this is to be found in the mystic Fourth Gospel, that of S. John, where into the mouth of the Christ the words are put, that the "knowledge of God is eternal life"— not the faith, nor the thought, but the knowledge—again declaring the possibility of this Gnosis. And the same idea is found along the line of the Hermetic Science, or Hermetic Philosophy, partly derived from Greece and partly from Egypt. The Hermetic philosopher also claimed to know, and claimed that in man was this divine faculty of knowledge, above the reason, higher than the intellect. And

whenever, among the thoughtful and the learned, you find reference made to "faith," as where, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is said to be "the *evidence* of things not seen," the same idea comes out, and Faith, the real Faith, is only this intense conviction which grows out of the inner spiritual being of man, the Self, the Spirit, which justifies to the intellect, to the senses, that there is God, that God truly exists. And this is so strongly felt in the East that no one there wants to argue about the existence of God; it is declared that that existence cannot be proved by argument. "Not by argument," it is written, "not by reasoning, not by thinking, can the Supreme Self be known." The only proof of Him is "the conviction in the Spirit, in the Self." And thus Theosophy, then, historically, as you see, always makes the affirmation that man can know; and after that supreme affirmation that God may be known, then there comes the secondary affirmation, implied really in that, and in the fact of man's identity of nature with the Supreme, that all things in the universe can be known—things visible and invisible, subtle and gross. That is, so to speak, a secondary affirmation, drawn out of the first; for clearly if in man resides the faculty to know God as God, then every manifestation of God may be known by the faculty which recognises the identity of the human Spirit with the Supreme Spirit that permeates the universe at large. So in dictionaries and in encyclopedias you will sometimes find Theosophy defined as the idea that God, and angels, and spirits, may hold direct communication with men; or sometimes, in the reverse form, that men can hold communication with

spirits, and angels, and even with God Himself; and although that definition be not the best that can be given, it has its own truth, for that is the result of the knowledge of God, the inevitable outcome of it, the manifestation of it. The man who knows God, and knows all things in Him, is evidently able to communicate with any form of living being, to come into relation with anything in the universe of which the One Life is God.

In modern days, and among scientific people, the affirmation which is the reverse of this became at one time popular, widely accepted — not Gnostic but "Agnostic," "without the Gnosis"; that was the position taken up by Huxley and by many men of his own time of the same school of thought. He chose the name because of its precise signification; he was far too scientific a man to crudely deny, far too scientific to be willing to speak positively of that of which he knew nothing; and so, instead of taking up the position that there is nothing beyond man, and man's reason, and man's senses, he took up the position that man was without possibility of knowledge of what there might be, that his only means of knowledge were the senses for the material universe, the reason for the world of thought. Man, by his reason, could conquer everything in the realm of thought, might become mighty in intellect, and hold as his own domain everything that the intellect could grasp at its highest point of growth, its highest possibility of attainment. That splendid avenue of progress Huxley, and men like Huxley, placed before humanity as the road along which it might hope to walk, full of the certainty

of ultimate achievement. But outside that, beyond the reason in the world of thought and the senses in the material world, Huxley, and those who thought like him, declared that man was unable to pierce—hence "Agnostic," "without the Gnosis," without the possibility of plunging deeply into the ocean of Being, for there the intellect had no plummet. Such, according to science at one time, was man; and whatever man might hope for, whatever man might strive for, on, as it were, the portal of the spiritual universe was written the legend "without knowledge." Thither man might not hope to penetrate, thither man's faculties might never hope to soar; for when you have defined man as a reasoning being, you have given the highest definition that science was able to accept, and across the spiritual nature was written: "imagination, dream, and phantasy."

And yet there is much in ordinary human history which shows that man is something more than intellect, as clearly as it shows that the intellect is greater than the senses; for every statesman knows that he has to reckon with what is sometimes called "the religious instinct" in man, and that however coldly philosophers may reason, however sternly science may speak, there is in man some upwelling power which refuses to take the agnosticism of the intellect, as it refuses to accept the positivism of the senses; and with that every ruler of men has to deal, with that every statesman has to reckon. There is something in man which from time to time wells up with irresistible power, sweeping away every limit which intellect or senses may strive to put in its path—the religious instinct. And even to take

that term, that name, even that is to join on this part of man's nature to a part of nature universal, which bears testimony in every time, and in every place, that to every instinct in the living creature there is some answer in the nature outside itself. There is no instinct known in plant, in animal, in man, to which nature does not answer; nature, which has woven the demand into the texture of the living creature, has always the supply ready to meet the demand; and strange indeed it would be, well-nigh incredible, if the profoundest instinct of all in nature's highest product on the physical plane, if that ineradicable instinct, that seeking after God and that thirst for the Supreme, were the one and only instinct in nature for which there is no answer in the depths and the heights around us. And it is not so. That argument is strengthened and buttressed by an appeal to experience; for you cannot, in dealing with human experience and the testimony of the human consciousness, leave entirely out of court, silenced, as though it were not relevant, the continual testimony of all religions to the existence of the spiritual nature in man. The spiritual consciousness proves itself quite as definitely as the intellectual or the sensuous consciousness proves itself—by the experience of the individual, alike in every religion as in every century in which humanity has lived, has thought, has suffered, has rejoiced. The religious, the spiritual nature, is that which is the strongest in man, not the weakest; that which breaks down the barriers of the intellect, and crushes into silence the imperious demands of the senses; which changes the whole life as by a miracle, and turns the face of the man in a direction

contrary to that in which he has been going all his life. Whether you take the facts of conversion, or whether you take the testimony of the saint, the prophet, the seer, they all speak with that voice of authority to which humanity instinctively bows down; and it was the mark of the spiritual man when it was said of Jesus, the Prophet: "He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." For where the spiritual man speaks, his appeal is made to the highest and the deepest part in every hearer that he addresses, and the answer that comes is an answer that brooks no denial and permits no questioning. It shows its own imperial nature, the highest and the dominant nature in the man, and where the Spirit once has spoken the intellect becomes obedient, and the senses begin to serve.

Now Theosophy, in declaring that this nature of man can know God, bases that statement on identity of nature. We can know—it is our continual experience—we can know that which we share, and nothing else. Only when you have appropriated for yourself something from the outside world can you know the similar things in the outside world. You can see because your eye has within it the ether of which the waves are light; you can hear because your ear has in it the ether and the air whose vibrations are sound; and so with everything else. Myriads of things exist outside you, and you are unconscious of them, because you have not yet appropriated to your own service that which is like unto them in outer nature. And you can know God for exactly the same reason that you can know by sight or hearing—because you are part of God; you can know

Him because you share His nature. "We are partakers of the Divine Nature," says the Christian teacher "Thou art That," declares the Hindu. The Sufi cries out that by love man and God are one, and know each other. And all the religions of the world in varied phrase announce the same splendid truth of man's Divinity. It is on that that Theosophy founds its affirmation that the knowledge of God is possible to man; that the foundation, then, of Theosophy, that the essence of its message.

And the value of it at the time when it was re-proclaimed to the world was that it was an affirmation in the face of a denial. Where Science began to cry "agnosticism," Theosophy came to cry out "gnosticism." At the very same time the two schools were born into the modern world, and the re-proclamation of Theosophy, the supreme knowledge, was the answer from the invisible worlds to the nescience of Science. It came at the right time, it came in the right form, as in a few moments we shall see; but the most important thing of all is that it came at the very moment when Science thought itself triumphant in its nescience. This re-proclamation, then, of the most ancient of all truths, was the message of Theosophy to the modern world. And see how the world has changed since that was proclaimed! It is hardly necessary now to make that affirmation, so universal has become the acceptance of it. It is almost difficult to look back to the year 1875, and realise how men were thinking and feeling then. I can remember it, because I was in it. The elder amongst you can remember it, for the same reason. But for the

younger of you, who have begun to think and feel in the later times, when this thought was becoming common, you can scarcely realise the change in the intellectual atmosphere which has come about during these last two and-thirty years. Hardly worth while is it to proclaim it now, it is so commonplace. If now you say: "Man can know God," the answer is: "Of course he can." Thirty-two years ago it was: "Indeed he cannot." And that is to be seen everywhere, all over the world, and not only among those people who were clinging blindly to a blind faith, desperately sticking to it as the only raft which remained for them to save them from being submerged in materialism. It is recognised now on all hands; literature is full of it; and it is not without significance that some months ago *The Hibbert Journal* —which has in it so much of the advanced thought of the day, for which bishops and archbishops and learned clerics write—it is not without significance that that journal drew its readers' attention to "the value of the God-idea in Hinduism." And the only value of it was this, for man: that man is God, and therefore can know God; and the writer pointed out that that was the only foundation on which, in modern days, an edifice that could not be shaken could be reared up for the Spirit in man. That is the religion of the future, the religion of the Divine Self; that the common religion, the universal religion, of which all the religions that are living in the world will be recognised as branches, as sects of one mighty religion, universal and supreme. For just as now in Christianity you have many a sect and many a church, just as in Hinduism we find many sects and many schools, and as in

every other great religion of the world at the present time there are divisions between the believers in the same religion, so shall it be—very likely by the end of this century—with all the religions of the world; there will be only one religion—the knowledge of God—and all religions sects under that one mighty and universal name.

And then, naturally, out of this knowledge there must spring a large number of other knowledges subservient to it, that which you hear so much about in Theosophical literature, of other worlds, the worlds beyond the physical, worlds that are still material, although the matter be of a finer, subtler kind; all that you read about the astral, and mental, and buḍḍhic planes, and so on—all these lower knowledges find their places naturally, as growing out of the one supreme knowledge. And at once you will ask: "Why?" If you are really divine, if your Self is the same Self of which the worlds are a partial expression, then it is not difficult to see that that Self in you, as it unfolds its divine powers, and shapes the matter which it appropriates in order to come in contact with all the different parts of the universe, that that Self, creating for itself bodies, will be able to know every material thing in the universe, just as you know the things of the physical plane through the physical body. For it is all on the same lines: that which enables you to know is not only body—that is the medium between you and the physical world—but the Knower in you is that which enables you to know, the power of perception which is of consciousness, and not of body. When consciousness vanishes, all the organs of consciousness are there, as perfect as ever, but the Knower has left them, and know-

ledge disappears with him; and so, whether it be in a swoon, in a fainting fit, in sleep, or in death, the perfect instrument of the physical body becomes useless when the hand of the master workman drops it. The body is only his tool, whereby he contacts the things in a universe which is not himself; and the moment he leaves it, it is a mere heap of matter, doomed to decay, to destruction. But just as he has that body for knowledge here, so he has other bodies for knowledge otherwhere, and in every world he can know, he who is the Knower, and every world is made up of objects of knowledge, which he can perceive, examine, and understand.

And the world into which you shall pass when you go through the portal of death, that is around you at every moment of your life here, and you only do not know it because your instrument of knowledge there is not yet perfected, and ready there to your hand; and the heavenly world into which you will pass out of the intermediate world next to this, that is around you now, and you only do not know it because your instrument of knowledge there has not yet been fashioned. And so with worlds yet higher, knowledge of them is possible, because the Knower is yourself and is God, and you can create your instruments of knowledge according to your wisdom and your will.

Hence Theosophy includes the whole of this vast scheme or field of knowledge; and the whole of it is yours, yours to possess at your will. Hence Theosophy should be to you a proclamation of your own Divinity, with everything that flows therefrom; and all the knowledge that may be gathered, all the investigations that

may be made, they are all part of this great scheme. And the reason why all the religions of the world teach the same, when you come to disentangle the essence of their teaching from the shape in which they put it, the reason that they all teach the same is that they are all giving you fragments of knowledge of the other worlds, and these worlds are all more real than the world in which you are; and they all teach the same fundamental truths, the same fundamental moral principles, the same religious doctrines, and use the same methods in order that men may come into touch with the other worlds. The sacraments do not belong to Christianity alone, as sometimes Christians think; every religion has its sacraments, some more numerous than others, but all have some. For what is a sacrament? It is the earthly, the physical representative of a real correspondence in nature; as the catechism of the Church of England phrases it: "An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." It is a true definition. A sacrament is made up of the outer and inner, and you cannot do without either. The outer thing is correlated to the inner, and is a real means of coming into touch with the higher, and is not only a symbol, as some imagine. The great churches and religions of the past always cling to that reality of the sacrament, and they do well. It is only in very modern times, and among a comparatively small number of Christian people, that the sacrament has become only a symbol, instead of a channel of living and divine power. And much is lost to the man who loses out of his religion the essential idea of the sacrament; for it is the link between the spiritual and

the physical, the channel whereby the spiritual pours down into the physical vehicle. Hence the value that all religions put upon sacraments, and their recognition of their reality, and their priceless service to mankind. And so with many other things in ceremonies and rites, common to all the different faiths—the use of musical sounds, a use which tunes the bodies so that the spiritual power may be able to manifest through them and by them. For just as in your orchestra you must tune the instruments to a single note, so must you tune your various bodies in order that harmoniously they may allow the spiritual force to come through from the higher to the lower plane. It is a real tuning, a real making of harmonious vibrations; and the difference between the vibrations that are harmonious and the vibrations that are discordant, from this point of view, is this: when all the bodies vibrate together, all the particles and their spaces correspond, so that you get solid particles, then spaces, and then solid particles, and spaces again, corresponding through all the bodies; whereas in the normal condition the bodies do not match in that way, and the spaces of one come against the solid parts of the other, and so you get a block. When sounds are used, the mystical sounds called mantras in Hinduism, the effect of those is to change the bodies from this condition to that, and so the forces from without can come into the man, and the forces in him may flow out to others. That is the value of it. You are able to produce mechanically a result which otherwise has to be produced by a tremendous exertion of the will; and the man of knowledge never uses more force than is necessary

in order to bring about what he desires, and the Occultist —who is the wise man on many planes—he uses the easiest way always to gain his object. Hence the use of music, or mantras, in every faith. Pythagoras used music in order to prepare his disciples to receive his teachings. The Greek and the Roman Catholic Churches use special forms of music to produce a definite effect upon the worshippers who hear them. All of you must be aware that there are some kinds of music which have the remarkable effect upon you, of lifting you higher than you can rise by your own unassisted effort. Even the songs of illiterate Christian bodies do have some effect upon them, in raising them to a higher level, although they possess little of the true quality of the mantra. In Theosophy you find all these things dealt with scientifically—a mass of knowledge, but all growing out of the original statement that man can know God.

Now it is clear that in all that, there is nothing which a man of any faith cannot accept, cannot study. I do not mean that he will accept everything that a Theosophist would say; but I mean that the knowledge is knowledge of a kind which he will be wise to study, and to appropriate so far as it recommends itself to his reason and his intuition. And that is all the man need do—study. All this knowledge is spread out for you freely: you can take it, if you will. The Theosophical Society, which spreads it broadcast everywhere, claims in it no property, no proprietary rights, but gives it out freely everywhere. The books in which much of it is written are as free to the non-Theosophist as to the Theosophist. The results of Theosophical investigation are

published freely that all who choose may read. Everything is done that can be done by the Society to make the whole thing common property; and nothing gives the true Theosophist more delight than when he sees the Theosophical teachings coming out in some other garb which gives them a different name, but hands them on to those who might be frightened perhaps by the name "Theosophy." And so, when we find a clergyman scattering broadcast to his congregation Theosophical teaching as Christian, we say: "See, our work is bearing fruit"; and when we find the man who does not label himself "Theosophist" giving any of these truths to the world, we rejoice, because we see that our work is being done. We have no desire to take the credit of it, nor to claim it as ours at all; it belongs to every man who is able to see it, quite as much as it does to anyone who may call himself "Theosophist." For the possession of truth comes of right to the man who can see the truth, and there is no partiality in the world of intellect or of Spirit. The only test for a man's fitness to receive is the ability to perceive; and the only claim he has to see by the light is the power of seeing.

And that, perhaps, may explain to you what some think strange in our Society—we have no dogmas. We do not shut out any man because he does not believe Theosophical teachings. A man may deny every one of them, save that of human brotherhood, and claim his place and his right within our ranks. But his place and his right within our ranks are founded on the very truths that he denies; for if man could not know God, if there were no identity of nature in every man with God, then there

would be no foundation for our reception of him, nor any reason for welcoming him as a brother. Because there is only one life, and one nature, therefore the man who denies is God, as is he who affirms. Therefore each has a right to come; only the one who affirms knows why he welcomes his brother, and the one who denies is ignorant, and knows not why he has a right within our ranks. But those of us who try to be Theosophists in reality, as well as in name, we understand why it is that we make him welcome, and it is based on this sane idea, that a man can see the truth best by studying it, and not by repeating formulæ that he does not understand. What is the use of putting a dogma before a man and saying: "You must repeat that before you can come into my Church"? If the man repeats it not understanding it, he is outside, no matter how much you bring him in; and if he sees it, there is no need to make that as a portal to your fellowship. And we believe, we of the Theosophical Society, that just because the intellect can only do its best work in its own atmosphere of freedom, truth has the best chance of being seen when you do not make any conditions as to the right of investigation, as to the claim to seek. To us, truth is so supreme a thing that we do not desire to bind any man with conditions as to how, or where, or why, he shall seek it. These things, we say, we know are true; and because we know they are true, come amongst us, even though you do not believe them, and find out for yourself whether they be true or not. And the man is better worth having when he comes in an unbeliever, and wins to the knowledge of the truth, than is the facile believer

who acknowledges everything and never gets a real grip upon truth at all. We believe that truth is only found by seeking, and that the true bond is the love of truth, and the effort to find it; that that is a far more real bond than the repetition of a common creed. For the creed can be repeated by the lips, but the seeing of truth as true can only come from the intellect and the spirit, and to build on the intellect and the spirit is a firmer foundation than to build on the breath of the lips. Hence our Society has no dogmas. Not that it does not stand for any truths, as some people imagine. Its name marks out the truth for which it stands: it is the Theosophical Society; and that shows its function and its place in the world—a Society that asserts the possibility of the knowledge of God; that is its proclamation, as we have seen, and all the other truths that grow out of that are amongst our teachings. The Society exists to spread the knowledge of those truths, and to popularise those teachings amongst mankind. "But," you may say, "if it be the fact that you throw out broadcast all your teachings, that you write them in books that every man can buy, what is, then, the good of being a member of the Theosophical Society? We should not have any more as members than we have as non-members." That is not quite true, but it may stand as true for the moment. Why should you come in? For no reason at all, unless to you it is the greatest privilege to come in, and you desire to be among those who are the pioneers of the thought of the coming days. No reason at all: it is a privilege. We do not beg you to come in; we only say: "Come if you like to come, and share the glorious

privilege that we possess; but if you would rather not, stay outside, and we will give you everything which we believe will be serviceable and useful to you." The feeling that brings people into our Society is the feeling that makes the soldier spring forward to be amongst the pioneers when the army is going forth. There are some people so built that they like to go in front and face difficulties, so that other people may have an easier time, and walk along a path that has already been hewn out for them by hands stronger than their own. That is the only reason why you should come in: no other. Do not come to "get"; you will be disappointed if you do. You can "get" it outside. Come in to give, to work, to be enrolled amongst the servants of humanity who are working for the dawn of the day of a nobler knowledge, for the coming of the recognition of a spiritual brotherhood amongst men. Come in if you have the spirit of the pioneer within you, the spirit of the volunteer; if to you it is a delight to cut the way through the jungle that others may follow, to tread the path with bruised feet in order that others may have a smooth road to lead them to the heights of knowledge. That is the only advantage of coming in: to know in your own heart that you realise what is coming, and are helping to make it come more quickly for the benefit of your fellow-men; that you are working for humanity; that you are co-workers with God, in making the knowledge of Him spread abroad on every side; that you are amongst those to whom future centuries will look back, thanking you that you saw the light when all men thought it was dark, and that you recognised the coming dawn when others

believed the earth was sunk in midnight. I know of no inspiration more inspiring, of no ideal that lifts men to greater heights, of no hope that is so full of splendor, no thought that is so full of energy, as the inspiration, and the ideal, and the hope, and the thought, that you are working for the future, for the day that has not yet come. There will be so many in the days to come who will see the truth, so many in the unborn generations who will live from the hour of their birth in the light of the Divine WISDOM. And what is it not to know that one is bringing that nearer? to feel that this great treasure is placed in your hands for the enriching of humanity, and that the bankruptcy of humanity is over and the wealth is being spread broadcast on every side? What a privilege to know that those generations in the future, rejoicing in the light, will feel some touch of thanks and gratitude to those who brought it when the days were dark, to those whose faith in the Self was so strong that they could believe when all other things were against it, to those whose surety of the divine knowledge was so mighty that they could proclaim its possibility to an agnostic world. That is the only reason why you should come into the vanguard, that the only reason why you should join the ranks of the pioneers. Hard work and little reward, hard words and little praise, but the knowledge that you work for the future, and that with the co-operation of Deity the final result is sure.

Part II

The Place of Phenomena in the Theosophical Society

Spiritual and Temporal Authority

The Relation of Masters to the Theosophical Society

The Future of the Theosophical Society

Four Lectures delivered to the Blavatsky Lodge, London, on 13th and 27th June, 4th and 11th July 1907.

The Place of Phenomena in the Theosophical Society

I HAVE taken for these four lectures, confined to members of the Theosophical Society, four subjects of great interest to ourselves, and in dealing with them I propose to ask you to look at them from a wide standpoint rather than a narrow one, and to consider the Theosophical Movement and the Theosophical Society, not as an isolated movement or Society, not as a separate thing, but rather as one of a series of spiritual impulses, like to its predecessors in its nature, interested in the same questions, and subject to the same conditions as those that preceded it in time.

We find, looking back over the history of the past, that great spiritual impulses occur from time to time, and each of these in the past has founded a new religion, or stamped some marked change in a religion already existing. The spiritual impulse that brought to birth the Theosophical Society is to be thought of as of the same nature as those which founded one religion in the world after another. And if we regard it in this way we can sometimes, looking at the whole succession of such movements, recognise certain definite principles working

in all of them, and then apply those principles to the movement of our own time. And this seems to me to be a wiser and saner way of regarding the Theosophical Society than looking upon it as unique and isolated. Certainly it is more easy to see our way in the solution of difficult problems of our own time, if we regard these problems as similar in nature to the problems that have been presented to our predecessors. Because always, in dealing with the problems of our own time, we are apt to be confused and bewildered by secondary issues that rise up around them, complicating them, perhaps largely clouding them, when we try to understand; whereas if we can catch sight of the underlying principle and study it apart from any difficulties of our own time, we are then able to apply that same principle, as discovered apart from the circumstances of the moment, and in that way there is a hope of applying it more justly amid the more exciting incidents of our own day. And it is that which I want to do in these lectures—to take our movement as a part of a world series, to study the principles that underlie the whole of that series, to trace out the working of these principles amongst the societies that have preceded us in the spiritual world, and then, having grasped them, to apply them to the solution of the problems of our own time. For there is a tendency in the Theosophical Society to narrow itself down to its time, instead of trying to widen out the thought of its time. It is a tendency which we see affecting every religion, every church, every great society, and it is useless to recognise this fact in the history of others unless we apply the fact for instruction in our own.

Now in all the religions of the past, so far as we have any knowledge of them in history or from what are called the "occult records," there is one thing we see in their early days—the presence of happenings regarded as abnormal. I have used the word "phenomena," but it is a very stupid word. One uses it because it is generally used; there is no justification in using that particular word in relation to some outer manifestations rather than to all. Properly speaking, "phenomena," of course, will cover the whole of the objects in the world, in the Not-Self, everything outside the Self; but the word has been narrowed down, especially in our own time, to those occurrences in the world around us, in the Not-Self, which are unusual, which seem to be abnormal, which are the results of laws which are not familiar, and therefore which are regarded by some people as supernatural, by others, speaking more carefully, simply as superphysical. And we lose much by separating off what we call "abnormal" happenings, the so-called "phenomena," from the normal everyday happenings of life. For there is no fundamental difference between them. All planes are equally within the realm of law; all worlds, denser or grosser in material organisation, are equally worlds moving by order and law. There is nothing really abnormal in Nature. Some things happen more seldom than others—are unusual; but the very idea of abnormal seems to me in many respects mischievous and harmful. It is better to look on the whole world-system—universe, call it what you will—as a part of a definite order in which all the things that happen happen by law, in which there no gaps, no abnor-

malities, but only limitations of our own knowledge at a certain time. All the gaps in Nature are gaps in the knowledge of the observers of Nature. There is nothing miraculous or supernatural, but everything is the orderly product of Nature working along definite lines and guided by definite intelligence.

And one reason why it is so important to recognise this is in order to clear away the atmosphere of wonder, of marvel, of awe, of reverence, that is apt, very much to the detriment of the observers, to enshroud everything unusual, every manifestation of a force with which we are not familiar, everything that in the old days was called "miraculous." And one thing I want strongly to impress upon you is, that in everything that can be called a "phenomenon," you ought to deal with it according to the same laws, according to the same canons of observation, as you deal with the phenomena with which you are most familiar on the physical plane. You should not regard an unusual phenomenon as one which is necessarily to be regarded with reverence in any way. You should not necessarily talk in whispers, when speaking about what we call "phenomena." It is better to talk in your natural voice, and apply your ordinary common sense and the laws of sane judgment in every case. If you do that instead of getting alarmed or astonished, if you will stand on your feet instead of falling on your knees, your study of the other worlds will be more profitable, and the dangers you are likely to meet will be very much diminished.

To come back to the point of the beginnings of all religious movements, we find that all begin in the atmos-

phere of "phenomena." The divine Man who founds the religion, and those who immediately surround Him, are always people who have a knowledge of more worlds than one. And because they are possessors of that first-hand knowledge, they are able to speak with authority. Now, the authority that should be recognised in all these matters is simply the authority of knowledge.

Another of the difficulties we want to clear away in studying phenomena is the idea that the happening of a certain thing by a law that we do not understand in the realm of matter gives any sort of authority on questions of spiritual knowledge, or gives a person a right to speak with authority on things not concerned with the particular laws under which that phenomena takes place. The mischief of the old idea of miracle was that it was supposed to be a proof, not of knowledge of another world or other forces, but of the title of the miracle-worker to speak with authority on religious and moral questions; while, as a matter of fact, the knowledge of what occurs on the astral plane, the knowledge of what occurs on the mental plane, or the power to utilise the forces of these planes in the production of certain happenings here which are not usual, these things by no means give a man any authority to speak on moral problems or to decide on spiritual questions. That is a matter of the utmost importance, for knowledge of the astral and mental worlds is the same in kind as knowledge of the physical world; and it no more follows that a clairvoyant or clairaudient, or a man who can use any of the powers of subtler planes down here, has more authority on religious and moral questions than a good

mathematician, a good electrician, or a good chemist. You are not likely, on the physical plane, to fall into the blunder of thinking that because a man is a good chemist he has authority on moral problems: you will at once see the absurdity. But many of you do not see that the same is true when you deal with good chemists or electricians belonging to the astral or mental planes. They have no more authority *quâ* their knowledge of these planes than the chemist. I often wish that in the Theosophical Society the old fable of the Jewish Rabbis was better remembered and applied. Two Rabbis were arguing, and one of them, to support his side of the argument, made a wall fall down; whereupon the other Rabbi sensibly remarked: "Since when have walls had a voice in our discussions?" That spirit is of enormous importance, and does not in any sense touch the fact that you find the great Founders of religions and the illuminated men who surrounded them were men who had power to produce phenomena of various kinds, to heal the sick, to make the lame to walk, and so on, and that phenomena always accompanied the great religious Teacher in the past. These things did not give Him His religious authority: they were simply the outcome of His knowledge of natural laws; for a man who is thoroughly spiritual has matter subject to him on every plane in Nature. But it by no means follows that the man who can manipulate matter on the lower planes is therefore able to speak with authority on the higher. The fact that the spiritual man is always a great psychic, always has power to utilise higher forces for controlling physical matter, that fact, while true, does not prove the truth of

the opposite idea, that the man who has power over matter is necessarily highly unfolded as regards the spirit. It is true, of course, that the founders of religion were men surrounded with clouds of phenomena, and the reason for that is the one I have just stated: that to the truly spiritual man matter is an obedient servant; to use a quotation from an Indian book: "The truly spiritual man all the siddhis stand ready to serve."

Now it was necessary for the founding of religions and for the teaching of many of the doctrines of religions which had to do with worlds invisible to the physical eye, that the man who first promulgated these doctrines should be a man who had a first-hand acquaintance with the conditions they described. For you must remember that in every religion there are two sides to its teaching: the side of the spiritual truths known only to the unfolded divine consciousness; the side of the existence of other worlds than this, and of the conditions existing in those worlds—important to men, as they have to pass into those worlds after death, important to men also, as much of the symbolism, the rites and ceremonies, are connected with what we may roughly call occult science. As the Buddha said when speaking of worlds beyond the physical: "If you want to know your way to a village and particulars about the village, you ask a man who lives there and who has gone along the roads leading to it: and so you do right to come to me when you want to know about the Devas and about the invisible worlds, for I know those worlds and I know the way thereto." So that looking back to these great spiritual Teachers and Revealers of the unseen, we find they are

always men of first-hand knowledge. That first-hand knowledge was shared by Their immediate followers, who carried on the teaching of the system after the Teacher had withdrawn. And it matters not what religion you take, living or dead, you will find it equally true, that phenomena were common in the earlier days of the teaching of that religion.

Now let me take two typical religions, one Eastern and one Western, with regard to the continuance of the phenomena of the earlier days—the Hindu religion in the East for the Eastern example, and the Roman Catholic Church in the West for the Western example. In both these great religious movements we find a continuance of phenomena; neither Hinduism as typical of Eastern teaching, nor Roman Catholicism as the most widespread form of Christianity in the West, has ever taken up the position that the life which showed itself through the earlier teachers was cut off and no longer irrigated the fields of the religion. On the contrary, you find both these typical religions claiming continuity of life and of knowledge. Amongst the Hindus it is a commonplace to assert the possibilities of yoga, that a man can now, as much as in the days of the Manu or of the great Ṛishis, do what They did, can free himself from the physical body, can travel into other worlds of the system, can acquaint himself with the forces and objects of those worlds, and carry on as definite a study of the Not-Self in those worlds, as anyone who wishes to do so may carry on a definite study of the Not-Self in the physical world. The claim has never been given up; the practice never wholly disappeared.

So also with the Roman Catholic communion. There has been there a succession of saints and of seers who have always claimed to be in direct touch with other worlds, and who have claimed and exercised the powers of those worlds manifestly on the physical plane. To-day in the Roman Catholic Church similar phenomena are said to occur, and certainly the evidence offered for these phenomena is far more easily verifiable than the evidence offered for such phenomena in the earlier centuries of the Christian story. So also among the Hinḍus it is more easy to prove nowadays the powers possessed by a yogî, than it is to prove the possession of those powers thousands of years ago in the obscurity of the earlier days of Hinḍuism. Consequently you find amongst Roman Catholics and Hinḍus a definite belief that these things are still possible; and the only thing that either will say with regard to their happening is that the greater descent of the people as a whole into materiality has made the possession of these powers a far rarer qualification of a believer in one or other of the religions, than was the case in the early days of enthusiasm, and of a greater outpouring of spiritual life. There is no doubt, so far as Christianity is concerned, that the sacred books of the Christians entirely support the Roman Catholic contention. I am not going into the question of the authenticity of particular phrases; I simply take the New Testament, as it is admitted to be a sacred book. There you have placed in the mouth of Jesus the distinct declaration that those who believe on Him should do greater works than He did; and in one passage —rejected, I know, as not in the original manuscripts by

many scholars, but still coming down from a great Christian antiquity—you have the distinct statement that they shall be able to drink poison, and so on. So it is clearly a part of the definite Christian teaching and tradition, that these so-called abnormal powers are within the reach of believers in Christianity. And so also with regard to Hinḍuism.

Now another thing is to be observed in this connection: that as the religion has gone on generation after generation, century after century, there has been a diminution of the powers, and a much less frequent happening of these so-called miracles. Side by side with the weakening of these powers and the lessening in number of the phenomena has been also the gradual lessening of the power of the religion over the minds and lives of men. The inroads of other forms of thought, the slackening of the grasp of the believer on the realities of the unseen worlds, have diminished religious authority, and the power of those unseen realities has weakened as time has gone on. So if we take the case of Hinḍuism or Christianity we find them giving back before the inroads of a more materialistic philosophy, before the inroads of a self-assertive science. We find among cultured and thoughtful people in the East and West there has been a great slackening of hold on the teachings of religion, and that the power exercised over the lives of believers has become much less real than in earlier days. That is inevitable, the result of the efflux of time, and the need for the recurrence of spiritual impulses lies in that fact, which is ever repeating itself. Just in the same way in which we read in the *Bhagavaḍ-Gîṭâ* that by the efflux

of time this yoga disappears, and then some teacher comes in order to restore vividness to the life, so it is over and over again in the case of every great spiritual movement.

Now when we apply these manifest principles and facts to the latest spiritual movement, that which gave birth to the Theosophical Society, we find that we are running through, in a very short time, the same series of facts as characterised the religions of the past. Here also, as with them, a great outburst of phenomena in the earlier days; H.P.B. living in a cloud of phenomena those who came in touch with her bathed in phenomena of all kinds. You can see the result of that early training in our late President, Colonel Olcott, to whom phenomena in connection with the Theosophical Society were the most natural things in the world. He had no hesitation in talking of them, was always bubbling over with his experiences of them in the past. You must remember, when he was over here, how much he thought about them, the pleasure he took in recalling his earlier experiences, and of showing the material articles produced phenomenally in those earlier days; and you cannot take up *Old Diary Leaves* without finding yourself face to face with every-day happenings of phenomena. Life then seemed to be made up of the abnormal, in the sense in which that word is used. The normal for the time being had disappeared. If a duster had to be hemmed, an elemental did it. If pencils were needed, a hand was put forward, twisted the pencils about, and there were twelve in place of the one, and so on. Much greater people than H.P.B. were concerned in producing

these phenomena. Colonel Olcott tells us how H.P.B. on one occasion drank some lukewarm water which a Master drew from a water-skin on a camel, and magnetised, and made her believe it to be coffee. On his removing the magnetism before she had finished drinking, she found to her disgust that she had been drinking this lukewarm water. The present-day Theosophist would probably have objected to such playfulness, but such things were continually happening in the early days. When Colonel Olcott came into the Society he came straight from the investigation of spiritualistic phenomena —a thoroughly well-trained observer, beginning with a good deal of scepticism, and beaten out of it by his own observations in innumerable spiritualistic séances. So that when he came in touch with H.P.B. he was no credulous, unobservant person, overborne by a number of wonderful happenings, but a thoroughly equipped and cold-blooded and well-trained observer of the super-physical, and he naturally brought his powers of observation to bear on these wonderful happenings. He has left on record the full stories of these earlier days. You may find similar stories, not to the same extent indeed, in Mr Sinnett's book, *The Occult World*. There we find similar instances, similar marvels worked by H.P.B. in order to arouse his attention, and to prove to him the existence of certain laws, which otherwise would have remained, so to speak, in the air. So there were also there a large number of unusual happenings—letters in pillow-cases, letters on branches of trees, and so on. You would all do well to re-read the *Old Diary Leaves* or *The Occult World*. Each one of you should deliberately ask

himself: "Why do I believe these things to be true?" Because it seems to me that most members of the Theosophical Society are rather slipping into the position of the modern Christian, that in order that a miracle may be true it must be old, and if it happens nowadays it must immediately be discredited. That is not rational. But it is a perfectly rational position to take up with all phenomena to say: "I shall not accept one of them unless thoroughly satisfied with the evidence on which it rests"; that is a perfectly reasonable attitude; but what seems to me a little less reasonable is to swallow wholesale the phenomena of the early days, and to look very much askance at anything that happens now; to glance back proudly to the past, and to regard anything which might happen now as wrong, as undesirable. Because if that is the right position, then it ought to be applied all round; it ought to be applied to the early phenomena of the Society as much as to anything that may occur now; and the same rigid demand for evidence should be made as is made at the present time. But, on the other hand, if the evidence be as full and as satisfactory now as that which supported the earlier phenomena, then it does not seem quite reasonable to accept the earlier and deny the later.

Let us for a moment see how far the Society has been going along the same line as that along which the other religions have gone—the gradual disappearance of phenomena and the substitution for them of teaching appealing to the reason only, and not to the senses, claiming its authority on grounds which appeal to the consciousness in man, as far as is practicable divorced

from matter, or to that consciousness working through comparatively thick and gross veils of matter. After the Coulomb difficulty there was a cessation almost entirely of these phenomena in the Theosophical Society. Two reasons led up to that: first, the utter disinclination of H.P.B. herself to continue to expose herself to the attacks of people with regard to her good faith. She was so maligned and slandered, so many friends turned against her and spoke of the powers she possessed as fraudulent and as tricks, that when her Master raised her from the bed that might have been her death-bed, and would have been, save for His coming to her at Adyar, she made the condition that she should not be forced to produce phenomena in the way she had been forced before; that she should be allowed to put that aside. The consent was given. Lion-hearted as she was, she shrank from the storm of slander that broke on her. The other reason was that people belonging to the Society took fright. The pressure of public reprobation was so strong, the force of unbelief so crushing, that the members of the Society itself shrank back and were afraid to face public opinion, ignorant and persecuting as it was; and it is pathetic and interesting to read the letters she wrote in the years immediately succeeding the Coulomb difficulty, in which she pointed out that those to whom she had brought the light were ashamed to stand beside her under the conditions to which she was then exposed. She complained that the writings in the Society were changing their character; that they were no longer occult and full of teaching of the unseen, but had become purely philosophical and

metaphysical; that her own journal had turned aside from its earlier occultism, and confined itself to articles addressed only to the intellect; and she says in one of these letters: "Say what you may, it was my phenomena on which the Theosophical Society was founded. It is my phenomena by which that Society has been built up." It was a natural feeling of half resentment against the policy of the time, that had left her in the lurch, and put the Society upon a different footing. It was in connection with that terrible time, in the turmoil and whirl of conflicting opinions, that those words recorded of her Master, spoken to herself, in one of the records left to the Society, occurred, in which He said: "The Society has liberated itself from our grasp and influence it is no longer a body over the face of which broods the Spirit from beyond the Great Range." Along those newer lines the Society went, and there are many who will say: "They are better lines. It is better that these abnormal happenings should fall into the background, that they should not be presented to a scornful and sceptical world, that we should rely on the literature that we have, without desiring to increase it by new knowledge, in which much can only be gained by abnormal means. Better to rest on what we have, and not try to add to it." Very many of our members take that view, and it is a perfectly reasonable view to take, a view which ought to have its place in the Theosophical Society, a view which is useful as correcting the tendency to undue credulity, which otherwise might hold on its way unchecked. For the life of the Society depends on the fact that it should include a vast variety of opinions

on all the questions on which difference of opinion is possible; and it is not desirable that there should be only one school of thought in the Society. There should be many schools of thought, as many schools as there are different thinkers who can formulate their thought, and each standing with an equal right to speak and of claiming a respectful hearing. None of them has a right to say: "There is no place for you in the Theosophical Society." Neither must the person who is strong on the subject of phenomena try to silence those who meet phenomena with disbelief, or who think them dangerous; nor should a person who stands only on philosophy and metaphysics say to the Theosophical acceptor of the phenomena: "Your views are wrong and dangerous." Perfect freedom of thought is the law and life of the Society; and if we are not fit for that, if we have not reached the position where we can understand that the more we can enrich the Society with differences of opinion and different standpoints, the more likely is it to do its work and live for centuries to come, when other new avenues of knowledge unfold before it, we are not ready to be members of the Theosophical Society at all.

Now the Society has gone along those lines, along which every religion has gone, from the time of the Coulomb trial. What has been the effect of that on religions? A weakening power. We have to beware that the same thing does not take place with us that has taken place with the different religions of the past; we should take care—especially in an era wherein ordinary science on the physical plane is pressing onwards into the higher realms of the physical plane, and on to the very threshold

of the astral plane, and bids fair to cross that threshold and demonstrate its teaching there—lest we, who claim to be in the forefront of this great movement, do not fall into the background, and become unworthy of carrying on the standard of knowledge. Therefore I would claim for the Society its place as a seeker after new knowledge, investigation by what we call clairvoyance, the definite and regular carrying out of the third object, which has been far too much neglected of late years; practically, where many years ago the Society was leading the way in the investigation of the hidden laws in Nature and the hidden powers in man, it now has to take a back seat with regard to the contributions it is making under that particular object for which amongst others it was founded. For more work has been done of late years by the Psychical Research and similar Societies than by the Theosophical Society, and that is neither right or wise —not right, because as long as we keep such research as one of our objects we ought to live up to it; not wise, because the lessons we have learnt, the various theories we have studied, are better guides to investigation than anything which the other Societies have, who have not yet been able to formulate theories but are simply in the state of collecting phenomena. For that reason it seems to me that the Society can do work here which the others cannot. They collect and verify with patient care masses of most interesting and valuable phenomena. The work done by the late Mr Gurney and Mr Myers, and a large number of their co-workers, is invaluable work from the standpoint of the Theosophical student. But there is no order in it; there is no reason in it. It is a

mere chaos of facts, and they cannot explain or correlate them. They cannot classify or place them in order. They have no world-embracing knowledge which enables them to place each fact in its own place, and to show the relation of one set of facts to the other. There are splendid observations, but no co-ordination and building of them into a science; and it seems to me that it is a duty of the Theosophical Society, not only to deal with the facts that others have verified, but to carry on researches by properly qualified persons among its own members; to utilise its magnificent theories, its knowledge—for they are more than theories—for the explanation of new phenomena, for the gradual evolution of new powers among greater numbers of its members; and I do not believe that in that there is so much danger as some people fear. I do not believe that the study of the hidden side of Nature is so perilous a study as some think. All researches at first hand in the early days of a science have some danger: chemistry, electricity, had dangers for their pioneers, but not dangers from which wise people and brave should shrink; and I fear for the future of the Theosophical Society if it follows the track of many of the religions and lets go its hold of knowledge of the other worlds, and comes to depend on hearsay, tradition, belief in the experience of others, and the avoidance of the reverification of experience. For it must be remembered that in giving a vast mass of knowledge to the world, H.P.B. distinctly stated that these are facts which can be reverified by every generation of observers; she did not give a body of teaching to be swallowed, to be taken on authority, to be accepted

by what is called faith; but a body of verifiable teachings, facts to be examined over again, facts to be experimented on, to be carefully studied, as the scientific man studies the part of the world he knows. Unless we can do that, I fear we shall tend only to become another religion among the religions of the world; that we also shall lose our power over the thought of our generation, and to that which has been done so splendidly in past years—the spreading of these ideas so that they are becoming commonplace now among cultured and intellectual people—pause will be given, and the spreading influence will be checked, because we have left part of our work undone, part of our message unsaid. And I would urge on you in relation to this that which I said in a sentence at the beginning of my address, that there is one condition of research into these matters common to ordinary science and to the science of the higher worlds, and that is a balanced judgment, acute and accurate observation, and a constant readiness to reverify and recast earlier observations in the light of the later ones that are made. All science grows by modification as more and more facts are collected by the scientific observers, and no scientific man would make any progress in his science, if he were always in the reverential attitude of the devotee before a spiritual truth when he is working out experiments in his laboratory. You may show reverence to great beings like the Masters, there the posture of reverence is the right one; but when you are dealing with the phenomena of the astral plane there is no more need to show reverence than with phenomena of the physical plane. It is out of

place, and if you make that atmosphere round it, you will always be at the mercy of misconception and error of all kinds. You must try, in all psychical research, in all weighing of observation of phenomena, to cultivate the purely scientific spirit, indifferent save to the truth and the accuracy of the results, looking on every matter with a clear eye, without bias and without prejudice; not seeking for facts to verify a doctrine already believed in, but seeking for facts in order to draw conclusions from them as to the laws and truths of the unseen world. There is no other safe way of investigation, no other reasonable condition of mind in face of the objective world; and if it be possible amongst us to break down this wall between the physical, astral and mental, to see all objects in all worlds as simply part of the Not-Self which we are studying, dealing with them in the same way, interpreting them in the same spirit, then we are likely to add largely to our knowledge without risking the loss of our judgment or becoming mere enthusiasts, carried away by marvels and unable either to observe accurately or judge correctly. The place of phenomena in the Theosophical Society seems to me to be a constant place. They must be recognised as fit objects for the study of the Theosophist. We must recognise frankly that our future literature depends on the development of these powers which can be utilised in the worlds beyond the physical; that we are not satisfied to be only receivers, but also desire to be investigators and students; that while we will check the observations of to-day by the observations of the past, and hold our conclusions lightly until they have been repeatedly verified, we will not

be frightened back from investigation by the idea that psychism is a thing to be disliked, to be shrunk from, to be afraid of. Some of you think that I have laid too much stress, when speaking of observations in the other worlds, on the probability of mistake. Some have blamed me from time to time because I have guarded myself so much by saying: "It is likely that mistakes have come into these observations." But it is only by keeping that frame of mind, that reiterated observation can correct the blunders which we inevitably fall into in our earlier investigations. There is no scientific man in the world who, when making experiments in a new branch of science, is not well aware that he may blunder, is likely to make mistakes, likely to have to correct himself, to find out that wider knowledge alters the proportion between his facts. And I have tried to lay stress on the fact that these things are true as regards the astral plane as much as they are true of the physical; that it is not a question of revelation by some highly evolved being, but a question of observation by gradually developing beings—a very, very different thing. And unless you are prepared to take up that reasonable position, unless you will allow the investigator to make mistakes and to correct them, without calling out too loudly against them, or abusing them for not being perfect and invariable, you will build a wall against the gaining of further knowledge, and cramp the Society, and give it only tradition instead of ever fresh knowledge, ever widening information.

So that I declare thus the place of phenomena in the Theosophical Society: I declare that it was founded with

them, built up by them, nourished by them, and that they ought to continue to be a department of our work, a proper subject for our investigation. Only, do not get confused by bringing faith into the region of phenomena. There is only one thing to which the word faith ought really to be applied: and that is the conviction of Deity within us. That is the real faith, the faith in the Self within, an unconquerable, imperial conviction of the Divinity which is the root of our nature. That faith is truly above reason; that conviction transcends all proofs and all intellect; but nothing in the object world is an object of faith; all are objects of knowledge. If you can keep that distinction clear in your mind; if you can remember that the only warranted conviction above reason is that conviction of your eternity, then you may go safely into the region of phenomena, into the manifestations and happenings of the objective world, with clear judgment, clear sight, unbiassed mind; and knowledge shall reward you in your researches into Nature, for Nature always has a reward for the seeker into her secrets.

Spiritual and Temporal Authority

I AM to speak to-night, as you know, on "Spiritual and Temporal Authority," and I have chosen this, with the other subjects, as bearing on questions of immediate interest to the Theosophical Society. But in dealing with each of these, as on the first occasion, I want, if I can, to lift you above any controversy of the moment, and to put before you broad outlines rather than mere details, and to lead you to look at all these questions from the wider standpoint of the experience of the past, trying to apply that experience as far as you can to the questions, the difficulties, of the present. And this question that I have chosen for the subject of our thought to-night is one which carries us back into the very beginnings of human history on our globe, which we may trace downwards through civilisation after civilisation, and we can then study, as it were by contrast, many of our modern civilisations. And out of all this it may be that we shall learn some lesson for our own small affairs of the moment. For local affairs are only really interesting as we see them as manifestations of the great principles which work out in the history of humanity; and we can only rightly, I think, understand the power

of the Theosophical Movement, if we see it in its proper place in history, and not as a mere bubble on the water of the present.

Now, far, far back—I suppose some people will say "not in history," for the time I am speaking of is what would be called "prehistoric"—when the great Lords from the planet Venus came to our globe to guide and train the humanity which just then had come to the birth, we find a group of Teachers and Rulers, not belonging to our humanity at all, but, as I said, coming from the planet Venus, from the far more highly evolved humanity living in that world. They came for the specific purpose of making the evolution of the new humanity more rapid than otherwise it would be. For, as you know, at that time humanity was facing a very terrible danger. The bodies had evolved up to a certain point, the brooding Spirit was over each body, but the intellectual evolution had scarcely begun to dawn; mind, as we know it now, had scarcely asserted itself; only mind, as we see it in the animals, had been slowly unfolding its powers in the upward-climbing towards the light. And as it is always true that any force which is poured down into a body must necessarily flow along the channels which that body has prepared for it, in these animal men, as we may call them, when they received a new influx of spiritual life—or, if we prefer the phrase, "as the influx grew stronger and stronger"—that new life, that additional force, inevitably ran into animal channels, lacking the guiding and directing force of the intelligence. Hence the immediate result of any increased downpouring from the spiritual plane was an increase in

animality in the growing man; and his body, growing up out of the animal kingdom, influenced by that—although, as you remember, human from the beginning, yet retracing its ancestry in those early days—was driven by the incoming life into various lines of activity, harmless to the brute, but that would have been destructive to the upward-climbing human being. Hence the need for a swift intervention on the part of the Guardians of all humanities; and our planetary Logos called to His help humanity from a chain older than His own, so that He might have for His infant children guides that would protect them against danger, and would lead them upwards more swiftly than they themselves could have climbed alone. Hence the coming of those Mighty Ones, and it was They who were the first Adepts, Masters, for our humanity. There is no other term for the moment to apply to them, although the term "Master" is really inappropriate: They were far higher in the Occult Hierarchy than Those we speak of as the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion. They became the first Teachers and Kings of our child humanity, and They were of many grades. "Divine Kings" They are called in the old records; Teachers and Kings in one. They established the polities of the infant nations; They gave to those same nations their religions; and in those early days, as in the days that will close our human history, there was no distinction recognised between "sacred" and "profane." It was seen that Spirit, clothing itself in matter, should be regarded in each of its tabernacles as a single individual. Spirit and matter were not regarded, so to speak, as distinguished from

each other, save in quality. The two combined into the making of the man. And the man's life was a human life, and the body guided by human consciousness; but the body was not thought of as separate from the Spirit, nor the Spirit from the body; both were combined into a single being. And in all true organisations that is the point which is to be aimed at: that the informing life shall shape and mould the organism which is thus expressing the life on planes of matter; that that organism shall ever be an organism spirit-inspired, life-shaped, so as to become more and more perfectly the expression of the life which it enfolds. We shall see presently that for a time, when Spirit became utterly blinded by matter, that matter, as it were, took the upper hand and claimed to be monarch. But in those far-off days it was still recognised that Spirit was the master of matter, and the Gods walked amongst men and were recognised by men as their Teachers and Kings. And humanity in its infancy clung to These, who were as fathers and mothers of the race, and looked to Them for everything necessary to nourish and develop the young life. So that looking back to those earlier days, the great lawgivers like the Manus were at once Kings and Priests. They gave everything to the humanity that They guarded: literature, science, art, architecture, everything which was necessary to the national life. And under that mighty protection grew up the vast civilisations of the past. You find traces of them, of course, in Egypt; traces of them, in fact, everywhere in the older, the now dying, or dead peoples. And these King-Priests, these King-Prophets, summed up in Their own divine persons all the ruling powers of

Spirit and matter alike. The State was a Church, or the Church was a State.

Gradually, as these Great Ones withdrew, as Those who only lived for service saw that humanity had begun to take its first steps, and needed less physical guidance and visible helping, others still great, but not as superhuman as the earlier ones, took up the royal and priestly rank. Still the two ran together: the temporal and spiritual power in one pair of hands; and so on and on, from Atlantis downwards. Some traces of it still survive, as in the Indian civilisation, where the ideal of the monarch is always that of the Divine representative upon earth. But in India, after the earliest days, you see the beginning division, and the offices of the King and of the Teacher gradually diverged the one from the other. And as time went on, and man grew a little older in his childhood, those who ruled over the State gave away out of their hands the teaching of the religion. Rightly and well; for it was necessary that humanity should learn to guide itself. It was on the downward arc still, not yet beginning its upward climbing, and it had to plunge deeper and deeper into matter. The eyes of the Spirit had to be blinded in order that the eyes of the intellect might open, and so gradually prepare humanity for a loftier manifestation of the spiritual life.

And then we find that with the dividing of the two offices, the Kings grew less and less fathers of their peoples, and became more and more tyrants over the nations. In the elder days the principle that was taught was clear and simple: the greater the power, the greater the sacrifice; the greater the power, the greater the duty.

And on that principle of the Law of Sacrifice the old civilisations were built up; to that they owed their splendor; to that the long ages through which they lived and flourished; to sacrifice, as the very basis of the national and religious polity, they owed the vigor, the young vigor, of humanity. Their literature was grandiose; their architecture magnificent; their art sublime. The traces of divinity ran through the whole of it. But, beautiful as it was, it would not have been well that it should have lasted, for had it been so, mankind would have grown to depend too much upon the manifested Divine life walking incarnate side by side with it. And it was necessary that the growing child should prove his own limbs, and the growing intelligence should learn to depend upon itself. Then we come to a long period when the tyranny of the King brought out more and more strongly the usefulness of the Teacher, and when the Teacher was continually standing between the power of the tyrant and the helplessness of the people; when religion became a shield for the weak, a strong check for the violence of power. And we pass thus through all that long period of human history where the oppressed found their only refuge in the priests of the religions, and found them a sure protection against the sword of the secular power. So went on for hundreds, nay, for thousands of years, the growth of humanity; and the two powers went further and further apart, coming more and more the one into opposition with the other. And the people, the nations, gradually grew in power, grew in intelligence, to a considerable extent. The priest was still the teacher, and still the

schools and the temples were united. Unfortunately, after a while the religions became corrupted as well as the royalties, and priests began to share the worldliness that had already degraded the Kings; and then, with the failure of the priesthood, practically ceased the education of the people for many and many a long century, and intelligence was not developed, and the power of the mind was not assisted to manifest itself.

And so onward and onward till we come to Middle Age Europe, and we find a down-trodden proletariat, an indifferent and luxurious kingship and priesthood, allied now to oppress, not to raise. Therefore, contest between the Church and the State, until the Pontiff of Rome remained the only representative of the union of the spiritual and temporal authority—his spiritual authority enormous, his temporal authority growing smaller, and badly used, so that in the States of the Church in Italy there was almost the acme of bad temporal government; and there was little to choose, really, between the States of the Church and the odious tyranny of Naples. In the States of the Church the old ideal of the Priest-King was degraded to its lowest point, and neither on the side of Pontiff, nor on the side of King, was the ruler of Rome the father, the shepherd of his people, but often only a devouring wolf. Hence the last degradation of a once magnificent office.

Meanwhile the Democracy was growing, and numbers were beginning to claim their power, until the people, having seen how badly Kings and priests could rule, thought that they could not, after all, do very much worse themselves, if they seized authority by the power

of numbers, and took the helm of the States, of the Nations, into their own rough and untrained grip. And so has risen in the modern life of Europe the power, as it is called, of the Democracy. Practically, at the present time, Democracy may be said to be on its trial. It cannot claim so far to be a very splendid success, but its trial is not yet over, and many a year may yet lie before it, in order that the world may have an object-lesson to show that the only true authority is the authority of Wisdom, and not the authority of numbers; and that it is not possible for humanity to take its next step onwards until it has managed to draw out of the lessons of the past and of the present some way of blending, some way of uniting, the different experiences through which it has passed. For all who study the world's unfolding and believe that this world is not alone, but is a part linked with other worlds, and that other beings above humanity take their share in humanity's evolution —all who thus look at history and see the powers that lie behind the veil and that pull the strings of those whom we call kings, and statesmen, and generals, and the mighty ones of earth, they know that no great human experiment can be void of its value, and no great human experiment but has some fruit of wisdom to be gathered from it. So that no wise man, no thoughtful Theosophist, should look with a feeling of repulsion and anger on the experiments that are being made all over the world to-day in the effort of the nations to rule themselves by numbers rather than by wisdom. For it is a necessary experience. Only in this fashion can the lower mind complete its evolution and be ready to give up its sceptre

to that Pure Reason which is to be the mark of the Sixth Race, which is to find its expression in the polity of that coming Race. Out of all these experiments we are to learn, out of all successes and all failures we are to spell out, the lesson whereon the next civilisation will be built, whereby its foundation will gradually be laid. For if one sees the Theosophical Society aright, it is as one of the builders of that coming time, one of the builders of the civilisation that has not yet really dawned on earth, the civilisation of the Sixth Root Race, with the experiments that will go before it in the Sixth and Seventh sub-races of the Fifth. For these experiments take long in the making, and, as a great teacher once said: "Time is no object with us." There is plenty of time for all the experiments, and all the blunders, and all the failures; and all the successes of the future will grow out of these, because every failure rightly seen is the seed of a coming success, and only by the failures that we make in our ignorance may the plant of wisdom be sown, and presently flower and bear fruit for the feeding of the nations. So that there is time enough, and no need for impatience, when we see the blunders of our various democratic governments. But there is much need that thoughtful people should take care so to see the signs of the time, and so to understand the forces at work, that the same blunder be not made in the days of the present as was made at the close of the eighteenth century in France; for there also was a time when an effort was made for a great step forward, a step too big, apparently, to be possible of being then taken, a step which only caused the drowning of the forward movement in blood, and

has thrown France backward, and not forward as some people suppose; for ever since that time she has had a cancer at the heart of her, and no effort that has been made has borne due fruit. Nay, it is even possible that that was her opportunity in which she failed, and that the opportunity will have to pass to other peoples, to be worked out by other hands.

Looking at the democracies of to-day, we see that both the great powers are rejected, King and priest alike, royalty reduced to a mere puppet, priesthood looked on with suspicion and with hatred; and in both cases one is bound to admit that there is much justification, for they are the result of the harm that unbridled power in Church and in State alike have wrought to the people, who are now revolting against both. But the revolt is only a passing thing. Humanity does not really change; only passing manifestations of it change; and though the passing manifestations be counted by centuries, what is that in the length of a day counted by myriads of years, and to peoples who are spiritual intelligences unfolding their powers in humanity? Kingship and priesthood are mighty powers, and the need for them deep-rooted in the nature of humanity. Only on the upward path they are different from what they were on the path of descent, and the way in which those are to be shaped and moulded and again made mighty, that will be the answer of human experience after it has proved the rule of ignorance to be a mistake and a failure. Gradually, in some way that as yet we do not see, a way will be found of discovering the wise, who alone have the right to rule. For there is no authority for the intelli-

gence, there is no authority for the free intellect of man, save the authority of Wisdom, to which the intellect bows because it is itself in flower. And those who develop the intelligence of men, as humanity is beginning to evolve its intelligence, they will only find their Kings and Priests where they see a wisdom greater than their own, a knowledge which transcends theirs, but is the promise of what they themselves in the future should become. And out of all the birth-throes of the present, and the ugly shapes which humanity takes on, will come the fairer birth of Wisdom, when again it shall sit on the combined throne of King and Priest. For it is necessary that human life should regain its unity, and that again the Spirit shall be known to be master, and the body its instrument, its tool, its expression. And on the upward-climbing arc we have again to come to the same levels that we passed in our downward-going arc of the ages of the past. In the half circle we had first the Priest-King; and then the two side by side, co-operators; and then the separation and the rivalry; and, finally, an evil junction to oppress the ignorant and the poor. And slowly we shall have to climb on the path where Spirit is manifesting more and more, and matter is becoming more and more obedient, until each of those stages is again seen in the history of humanity, and until, at the end, Spirit shall be lord unchallenged, and matter obedient servant, carrying out his will. And in the humanity of the great Sixth Race in which Buḍḍhi, or Pure Reason, is to be the mark, in which Wisdom will be the shaper of humanity's plans, and the strength of matter will be used in order to carry them out, in those

days there will be the building-up of the dual authority once more, and the shaping of it to diviner ends than even in those early days of the infant humanity. And in those days, again, ruler and priest shall be one, until at last the unity shall be realised in the life of those who are to accomplish their human evolution upon earth; until finally in each spiritual individual these two characteristics are unfolded, and each man is King and Priest, uniting the two phases in his own individuality, and learning, in that dual power, to become the servant of those who are less evolved than himself. You see a touch of that when the Christian religion was sent out into the world, a glimpse of the splendid ideal when the Apostle, writing to his infant Church, spoke of them as "Kings and priests unto God"; in each individual this identity is to be at last achieved, so that no outer rule is any longer necessary, the inner rule being enough. That unity will mark the closing scenes of life on earth in each of those whose human evolution will be finished, who will have to pass on into other worlds when they shall have united again each of these in their own persons, and shall use that twofold power for the training of the humanity below them, ascending towards the point which they shall have gained and shall occupy.

Such the vast sweep of humanity's evolution: from Spirit, through densest matter, upward-climbing again to Spirit, bearing with it all the powers that by the experience in matter it has gained. Such the great sweep, and the great history. What relation has that to our little Society and our little movement? Some would be inclined to say: "None; no relation at all.

You cannot bring down into so small a microcosm those great principles shown out in their working in a macrososm." And yet if you and I, in our tiny personalities, repeat in miniature the life of the Logos in the vast sweep of His creative activity, who shall say that in a movement such as ours there is not similarly a retracing of the lines along which humanity at large has to grow? And who shall say whether we may not understand our movement better, and guide it more wisely, if we recognise these correspondences of the great growth of the world to the small growth of our Movement—a world-reflection in a tiny mirror? For it is no true humility to lessen too much the varied operations of the Great White Lodge in the world of men, any more than it is a true humility for the individual to be ashamed to claim his divine inheritance, and look upon himself as a "mere worm of earth." The men or women who only feel themselves to be of the earth, and not of Deity, their lives become more vulgar and common than they ought to be; for it is a great thing to realise possibilities and to see correspondences, and to take out of them their inspiring value, their invigorating force. And just as you and I have the right to say that we are Gods in the making, and that there is nothing in the great power of the Logos that does not lie hidden in germ within ourselves, just as we have the right to say that, as man best understands himself when he knows himself divine and realises the possibilities within him, and sees the road to Deity which he is to tread, so is every spiritual movement great in proportion to the realisation of its one-ness with the great world-movement, and small and petty when

the men and women who compose it can only keep their eyes on the muck of the earth instead of looking up to the crown of stars that the angel holds over their head. So that I do not fear to provoke a false pride, but rather to get rid of a false humility, when I ask you to see in this Movement, which belongs to the Great Lodge and is its child, to see in it the same forces at work that you see working in the world-history, and to realise that here also correspondences exist, and that we may guide our Movement most worthily by seeing those correspondences and utilising them for the common good.

So let us pause now, after these high flights, in the little valley in which we live, and see whether in the Theosophical Society any such process of events may be seen as has been played on the great world theatre, in the drama of evolving humanity. For mind! we have no meaning unless we are related to that, and our Movement has no sense unless it retraces the steps of the great world drama, as every great spiritual movement does, from the time of its birth to the time of its passing away, and its incarnation in some other form. I do not claim it for our Society only, but for all great spiritual movements—churches, religions, call them what you will.

Now, we began our Movement as humanity began its education. There was no difference between spiritual and temporal. The whole Society was regarded as a spiritual movement; and if you go back to those early days, and read the earliest statements, you will find it said that this Society existed in what then were called three Sections: First, Second, and Third. The First Section was the Brotherhood, the Elder Brothers of

Humanity; the Second, those who were striving to lead the higher, the more spiritual life, and were in training for the purpose; and the Third Section made up the bulk of the Society. Those three Sections were the Theosophical Society. So that it began on a very lofty level; and its First Section, the Elder Brothers, Those whom we speak of as Masters, They were regarded as forming the First Section of the Society, and as part of it; and the Society has linked closely the Second and Third Sections under the First, as in the days when the Gods walked with men, in the early story of humanity. And They came and went far more freely then than later, and mingled more with the Society, taking a more active part in this work; and it is wonderful to read some of the old letters of the time, and the close and intimate knowledge shown by those great Teachers of the details of the work of the Society, even of what was written about it in an Indian newspaper, and what ought to be answered, and so on. And the Society grew, became more numerous, and spread in many lands; and naturally as it spread, many of these ties somewhat weakened so far as the Society, as a whole, was concerned—not weakened with individuals, but somewhat weakened with the Body at large. And so things went on and on, until the Society passed through the same stage through which humanity had passed when the Priest-Kings entirely disappeared, and when those words were spoken by one of the Great Ones: "The Society has liberated itself from our grasp and influence, and we have let it go; we make no unwilling slaves. . . . Out of the three Objects the second alone is attended to; it is no longer

either a Brotherhood, nor a body over the face of which broods the Spirit from beyond the Great Range." And when that time was well established a change was made in the organisation of the Society. It was no longer, so to speak, one and indivisible, but two parts were made—Exoteric and Esoteric; and, as you know, for some time the Colonel fought against that, thinking it meant an unwise and dangerous division of authority in the Society, until, as he was coming over here with his mind in opposition to the proposal that H.P.B. should form the Esoteric Section, he received, on board the steamer on which he travelled, a letter from his Master telling him to carry out what H.P.B. wished; and, ever obedient as he was, for when his Master spoke he knew no hesitation, when he arrived here in England he did what he had been told, and authorised the formation of what was then called the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society. You can read all this for yourselves; it is all in print. Then came that distinct cleavage of Exoteric and Esoteric—the two heads, H. S. Olcott and H.P.B., one wielding the temporal and the other the spiritual authority in the Society. It meant that the Society had ceased to be the spiritual vehicle it was in the earlier days. It meant, as was printed at that time, that some of the members wished to carry on the Society on its original lines, and so they formed themselves into this Section under her, on the original lines. So it went on, like that time in the history of humanity, in order that certain faculties might grow and become strong, and that the spiritual side for a time might seem apart, and the other might go its own way unruled. Many difficulties grew

out of it, but still they were not insuperable—a certain clashing of authorities from time to time, and certain jealousy between the one and the other. These things were the inevitable concomitants of the separation, of the differences between the spiritual and temporal sides, the Spirit and the body, as it were. So things went on until the President passed away. When H.P.B. left us, she left me in charge of her work, as her colleague did in Adyar lately, thus uniting again the two powers, the two authorities, in a single person.

Now, what does it mean to the Society? That is the question for us. What is it to bring forth in our Movement? Ill or well? It is only possible, at this beginning of the road, to point out the two things that *may* happen. For the Society and its President together will have to settle which of the two shall come. It may be that They, who from behind look on, may foresee what is coming; or it may be, as it often is, that They also are not able completely to say what shall come out of the clashing wills of men, differing views, possible antagonisms. Two possibilities there clearly are before us, either of which, I suggest, may come. For you and for me it is to decide which shall come. And I can only tell you how it seems to me, and you must judge and act as you think right. For at last our Society, like humanity, has reached the point when the individual must do his duty, and must no longer be a child guided entirely from without, but a man with the God within co-operating with the God without. Hence it is not a question for any to decide for us: we have to decide it for ourselves. And as I say, I can only put to you what seem to me the two possibilities. Let

me take the bad possibility first. It may be that I, in whose hands these two powers now are placed, shall prove too weak to bear that burden, too blind to walk along that difficult path. It may be that I shall err on the one side or on the other, either making the Society too exoteric and empty, a material thing, or, on the other hand, pressing too far the spiritual side, with all that that means. It may be that the task is too great, and that the time has not come. I recognise that as possible; for in all questions of peoples, persons, and times, experiments may be made which it is known will fail, in order that out of the failure fresh wisdom may be gathered, and it may be that this shall be a failure. And if so it matters not, for out of that failure some higher good will spring. That is the conviction of those who know that the Self is ever in us, and that the Self can never perish; so that it matters not what catastrophe may come, provided faith in the Self remains secure with His endless possibilities of recovery, and greater powers of manifestation. And it may quite well be that, in hands as weak and knowledge as limited as mine, failure will meet this great experiment which the Masters are making, and that we shall find that neither President nor Society is fit to take that step forward, are both still too childish, not sufficiently mature, and therefore not able to tread the path which is the path upwards to the spiritual life, when the organisation shall again become but the mere outside veiling of the spiritual life, carrying the message of regeneration to the world, and the birth of a new civilisation. That is one possibility that should be faced. And the other?

The other is that we may permit the Great Ones to be sufficiently in touch with our little selves to send Their forces through us, and that Their life shall become the life of the Society; that out of this rejoining of spiritual and temporal a greater spirituality shall circulate in every vein and vessel of the Society, and it shall become again truly a vehicle of the Masters of the Wisdom. It may be that it is preparing for a greater and a nobler life, making the place ready for some greater one to come, who shall worthily and strongly wield the power that I am bound to wield too weakly, but yet, perhaps, strongly enough to make that preparation possible. Perhaps you and I together are strong enough and wise enough to till the field, where another shall sow the seed that shall grow up into a greater civilisation and mark a step forward in the history of humanity. That is our great opportunity, that the possibility that I see opening before us in this policy now changed for the second time. It may be that we have learned enough in the last eighteen years to tread this path rightly, to tread it sufficiently to prepare a field for a greater one to come; and that is the hope in which I live at the present time. I believe that it is possible, if only we can rise to the height of our great opportunity, that someone will come from the far-off land where greater than we are living, and take this instrument and make it fit to be a tool in a Master's hand—some Disciple greater and mightier than I, someone belonging to the same company, but far wiser and far stronger than I. And that such a one will take this Movement and make it a little more what the heart of the Masters desires—more truly a Brotherhood, more full of knowledge, more

really linked to the higher worlds by a centre of wise Occultism—that seems to me the great possibility which is opening before us. But, as I said, I know not if we are great enough to take it, or are still too small; but it is to that great work that I would invite your co-operation; it is to that mighty task that I would ask you to address yourselves. At least believe in the possibility of it; at least raise your eyes to that great stature to which it may be our Society shall attain. For if we can rise to it, then it means that we shall be builders of the next civilisation, that our hands shall take part in the making of the foundation of the humanity that is still to be born; it means that we shall be its forerunners, its heralds, that we shall be the messengers whose feet shall be fair upon the mountains, telling of the coming of a greater man, of the birth of a more spiritual humanity. And even supposing that, accepting that ideal, we fail, supposing that we are not strong enough, and wise enough, and unselfish enough, to do it, then, then—if I may quote the words of Giordano Bruno—"It is better to see the Great and fail in trying to achieve it, than never to see it, nor try to achieve it at all."

The Relation of the Masters to the Theosophical Society

THOSE of you who have been present in the Queen's Hall on Sunday evenings will remember that I spoke there a fortnight ago on "The Relation of Masters to Religions." There, of course, I dealt with the subject in the most general possible way, while here I propose to deal with it more closely; but I must ask all of you, as I asked you last Thursday and the preceding Thursday, to remember that in dealing with the Theosophical Society we are only dealing with one part of a world-wide and, as I might say, century or millennium-wide story — the story, practically, of the relation of the spiritual world to the physical. Although I am now going to deal specially with the relation of the Masters to our own Society, I would ask you all to bear in mind the more general relation of which I have spoken elsewhere. I do not want to repeat what there I said, but I want to recall to your minds the leading principle that the Theosophical Society cannot claim an exclusive right to any special spiritual privilege, that the spiritual privileges that it enjoys are part of the

general spiritual heritage of the world, and that you have to consider any special case in relation to those general principles. So that in thinking of the Masters in relation to our own Society, we must bear in mind how very wide are their relations to all great spiritual movements, to all religions, and that all who are spoken of in the different faiths as Founder or Founders of a particular religion would fall under the name, Master.

Now I was hesitating a moment in completing that sentence, because one almost has to explain that in thus using the word one is including in it a little more than is included under the term in the special significance with which we are going to use it now; for in the case of the religions of the Hindus, the religion of the Buddhists, and the religion of the Christians, when we speak of the Founder of each of these religions, we are speaking of great personages who, in the Occult Hierarchy, are higher than those whom we call Masters: in the case of Hinduism, the Manu, who is the Lord really of the whole of the Fifth Root Race; in the case of Buddhism, the Buddha, who is a teacher of all gods and men before He takes up His place as the illuminated, the supreme Buddha. And in the case of the Christian Religion also, there is something peculiar in the life of the Founder. You have there, in the first place, a being whom we call by the name Jesus, in himself a disciple, but living in the world at that time under exceedingly strange and peculiar conditions. Some of you may have read with some amount of care that section of the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* which is called "The Mystery of

the Buḍḍha." I am bound to confess that as it stands there it is very confused, partly intentionally, I think, on the part of the writer, but also partly in consequence of the fact mentioned in that volume, that you have there put together a large number of fragments, and they were put together by myself at a time when I knew very much less of the arrangement, so to speak, of those relationships between the higher and lower worlds than I do now. Hence there is some darkness there that belongs to the subject, and some that belongs to the incompetence of the compiler. The result of the two together is a good deal of confusion to any student who has not the key to it. I am only concerned for the moment with one of these statements, with what are called "the remains of the Buḍḍha"—not a very comfortable name, because it gives one the idea of a corpse—that is, empty bodies of the Buḍḍha on the various planes. Those have been preserved on the higher planes for special purposes, and are occasionally used under very peculiar conditions, when subtle bodies of a very pure and very lofty character are needed for some particular purpose. Now in the case of Him who was known as Jesus, the subtle bodies were these particular bodies that are kept on the higher planes, and He was allowed to use these for a number of years, holding them, as it were, as tenant for the great personage who was to take possession of them later. Then came the lofty being known as the Boḍhisaṭṭva, who took possession of these vehicles which had thus been kept ready for Him, and He who was the disciple and now is the Master Jesus took birth later as Apollonius of Tyana, and so passed

onwards step by step until he became one of the Masters of the Wisdom.

I made that slight digression because otherwise I should have conveyed a slightly false impression by the phrase "all Founders of religions." We mean amongst ourselves by the word "Master," when used accurately, a very distinctly marked rank in the Occult Hierarchy; He is a being who has attained what is called "liberation" in the East, what is called "salvation" in the West; a being whose soul and Spirit have become unified, who lives consciously on the highest plane of our own universe—the fivefold universe—and whose centre of consciousness is on the âṭmic, sometimes called the nirvâṇic, plane. Living in full consciousness on that plane, He has no sense of bondage in any form with which He may ally Himself. He has passed during His Arhaṭship beyond all desire for life in form, or life out of form. He has thrown away those fetters; together with the limiting "I-making" faculty, the limit of individuality, that also has gone. His consciousness, then, working on this âṭmic plane, works indifferently up and down through all the five planes, and the whole of these together form to Him but a single plane, the plane of His waking consciousness. That is an important point to remember, for there is often a certain confusion of thought with regard to this term "waking consciousness." It ought not to mean simply the consciousness that you and I may have as waking consciousness, confined to the physical world; but the consciousness which —enlarging stage by stage as the active centre of consciousness rises through the planes inwards—is aware

of all which is below that centre; and is aware thereof without it being necessary for the person to leave the physical body, in order that that consciousness may be in an active and working condition. The waking consciousness is the normal, daily consciousness, and may include the physical plane; or physical and astral; or physical, astral, mental; one more when you take in the buḍḍhic; one more when you take in the âṭmic; and provided that the person whose consciousness is spoken of does not need to leave his active body, his body of action, in using his consciousness on any of these planes, does not have to throw the body into trance in order to be conscious on any or on all of them, we speak always, then, of that consciousness as being "his waking consciousness." Some disciples, for instance, will often include in the waking consciousness the astral, mental, and even buḍḍhic planes; but it is characteristic of the Master alone that He unites in His waking consciousness the whole of the five planes on which our universe is gradually unfolding. So that we may define the position of the Master, for the moment, as that of a Person who has reached liberation; the meaning of that being that he is living in the Spirit consciously; that he is in conscious relation to the Monad, above the âṭmic plane; his centre of consciousness is there, and as the result of the centre of consciousness being in the Monad, the whole of the five planes become part of his waking consciousness. As regards the bodies there is also a difference: the whole of the five bodies of these planes act for Him as a single body, His body of action. That does not mean, of course, that He cannot

separate off the parts if He needs to do so; but it means that in His ordinary, normal condition, the whole of His bodies are only layers of a single body, just as much as solid, liquid, gases, and ethers, for you and me, form our physical body, and we need not trouble to distinguish the matter belonging to one sub-plane or another. So to the Master, the matter of the whole of these planes forms His body of action, and although He is able to separate one part from another if he desires, normally He will be working with the whole of them together, and the whole will constitute the instrument of His physical or waking consciousness.

It is hardly necessary to add to that definition that He is one who is always in possession of a physical body; it is implied in the very description I have been giving. That part of it is important only, or chiefly, when you are considering the question of liberation in relation to a number of different classes, as we may say, in this great Occult Hierarchy, the names in the West are not familiar, and there is no particular need to trouble you with them for the moment in the Samskṛit form. Speaking generally, you have a class I have just alluded to, the Masters who possess the physical body, and another who are without that body, and are therefore not called Jîvanmukṭas (the name you so often find in our books in relation to the Masters) but Mukṭas, with a prefix which means "without a body." Then again you may have other classes, Beings who perform various functions in the universe; some, for instance, animate the whole of the physical universe, and are distinguished as being what is called blended with matter, the class that gives

the sense of life, of consciousness, to all those things in Nature which so much impress the mind occasionally when we are face to face in solitude with some splendid landscape—some great forest, perhaps, in the silence. We need not go into these various classes; I only mention them in order to separate from the rest that particular class of freed, liberated, or, if you like the Christian term, "saved," persons, who no more need come involuntarily into incarnation, but who are free both as regards consciousness and as regards matter.

Now these great Beings that I have just defined ought to be separated in your thought for a very practical reason that we shall see in a moment; they ought to be separated in your thought from those still mightier Beings in the grades of the Occult Hierarchy that stretch further and further upwards into the invisible worlds. For you lose a great deal practically when you mass the whole of them together, and fail to recognise the particular function of a Master, as regards the world in which He voluntarily takes incarnation. It is the kind of distinction that we have sometimes put to students as regards the use of the words Jesus and Christ; Jesus denotes specifically the man, the living man, the Master, who is still in possession of a physical body, and in close relation to the physical earth; the Christ, in a higher sense, is an indwelling spiritual being, who can be reached by the Spirit, but not seen as such by the eyes in any phenomenal world. So again there is the yet loftier Being to whom the name of Christ is applied amongst the Christians, when they are speaking of One we call the Second Logos; these are Beings of different

grades, and in different relations to mankind; but the Master, as Master, is a man, and the manhood must never be forgotten. It was on that point that H.P.B. laid so much stress in speaking of those Beings with whom she had come into physical contact, whom she knew in their physical bodies; and one thing, as you know, which she protested against in relation to this type of Being was the putting Them too far away from human love and sympathy, making Them belong to a class of beings to whom at present They do not belong, and hence making a gulf between Them and humanity which ought not to be made, because the making of it destroys Their value to the people who make it. A phrase she once used, that I have quoted to you before, is the complaint that "they have turned our Masters into cold far-off stars, instead of living men," and on the fact that They are living men she continually insisted; for it is by virtue of that living manhood that They are able to play the part that They play in the evolution of the race. Others have other work to do as regards humanity, as regards the destinies of the nations, and so on, but these particular people are still in close touch with the humanity to which They belong, and They deliberately refuse to go on away from it, remaining with it until humanity, at least with regard to very, very large numbers of its members, has reached the position in which They stand to-day, as the promise of what humanity shall be, the first-fruits of humanity as it is. They are specially concerned with the direct teaching, training, and helping of man, in the quickening of his evolution; and the reason the body is retained is in order that this close personal touch may

be kept, primarily with Their disciples, and then through Their disciples with comparatively large numbers of people. And it is a marked and significant fact, that just in proportion as a religion has lost touch with this aspect of the Divine Life which we call the Life of the Master, so has it tended to become more formal, less highly vitalised, less spiritual, with less of the mystic element in it, and more of the literal; so that it becomes necessary in the efflux of time that every now and again a Master should come forth from the Great White Lodge, and testify again upon earth to the reality of the tie between the Elder Brothers of the race and the younger brothers who are living constantly in the physical world.

Now one distinguishing mark of a Master, His chief function, we may say, is to perform the greatest act of sacrifice which is known in the Occult Hierarchy, save the act of the One who is called The Great Sacrifice, the Silent Watcher, whose sacrificial act is still greater than the sacrificial acts performed by Those who are spoken of as Masters. This particular act of sacrifice, occurring from time to time at the beginning of a new epoch in religion and civilisation, is performed by one of the Body, who volunteers to start a further spiritual impulse in the world, and to bear the karma of the impulse that He generates. That may not appear to you at first glance, unless you have gone into the subject carefully, to be such a transcendent act of sacrifice as it really is. It may seem a comparatively small thing to start such an impulse, and very vague probably are the ideas of many of you as to what is implied in the statement "bearing the karma," which the generation of the

impulse implies. The great act of sacrifice lies not only in the truth that He is wearing a physical body of coarse matter, which hampers Him from time to time, but that He cannot lay that body aside, once He has used it for giving this great spiritual impulse, until that impulse is entirely exhausted, and the religion, or the association, to which it has given birth has vanished out of the physical world. Take, for instance, the case of the Master, Jesus: He—by His own voluntary act of course, in the beginning, for it is always a volunteer who comes forward; such a sacrifice cannot be imposed—He, voluntarily, giving up His body, and later taking from the Bodhisattva the guarding of the infant plant of which the Bodhisattva had sown the seed which was to grow into the great tree of Christianity, taking that from Him, He bound Himself by the acceptance of that work to remain in the bonds of the physical body until the Christian Church had completed its work, and until the last Christian had passed away, either into liberation, or re-birth into some other faith. It is the same with the other great religions, so many of which are now dead —the religion of Egypt, of Chaldea, and many another. The Masters who had to do with those have long since cast away Their physical bodies, and thereby ceased to be what we call Masters, because the religion that each gave to the world had done its work, and no souls remained who could be further helped by passing through the teaching and the training of that particular religion. This is the central idea of the act of sacrifice, and it becomes the more a sacrificial act because the One who undertakes this tremendous task cannot tell how the

impulse will flow in all its details, cannot even estimate the amount of difficulty, of delay, nay, of mischief, that may grow out of the impulse that He has given. In the first place, He Himself is limited by these bodies that He has assumed. He cannot use the whole of His vast consciousness within the limitations of a physical brain and a physical body. Thus, although He has unified His bodies and is able, so to speak, to run up and down the ladder of the planes as He will, He is still largely limited in His activities where He is working in the unplastic matter of the physical plane; and so, when He undertakes a work like this, He generates causes whose effects He cannot thoroughly calculate, He takes the risk which surrounds every great undertaking, He submits Himself to the conditions of this task upon which He enters, and He is obliged, having once taken it, to bear it until success or failure has crowned the effort that He makes.

Those of you who have carefully thought on these subjects will realise that while the knowledge of a Master is, as regards you or me, practical omniscience, it is by no means omniscience on His own plane, relative to the problems with which He has to deal and which He has to solve. A Master amongst Masters, a Master within the Great White Lodge, He is amongst His peers, in the presence of His Superiors, and the problems with which that Lodge has to deal, the questions on which that Lodge has to decide, are, if I may use the phrase, as difficult and as puzzling on that plane of being as the problems that we have to decide down here are on our plane. Hence the possibility of miscalculation, the possibility of error, the possibility of mistake; and you can well

understand that these beings are subject to such limitations when you remember the startling assertion that even the Lord Buḍḍha Himself, high above the Masters, that even He committed an error in His work on the physical plane. When, then, a Master volunteers to serve as what may literally be called the scapegoat of a new spiritual movement, He takes up a karma whose whole course He is unable to see. And it need not, therefore, be a matter of surprise that when the time was approaching when another great spiritual impulse might again be given, according to cyclic law, when the two who volunteered to undertake the task, to make the sacrifice, offered Themselves in the Great White Lodge, differences of opinion arose as to whether it was desirable or not that what we now call the Theosophical Society should be founded.

The time came, as most of you know, I suppose, for an effort of some sort to be made. It had been so since the fourteenth century, for it was in the thirteenth century that in Tibet a mighty personage then living in that land, promulgated His order to the Lodge that at the close of every century an effort should be made to enlighten the "white barbarians of the West." That order having gone forth, it became necessary, of course, to obey it; for in those regions disobedience is unknown. Hence at the close of each century—as you may verify for yourselves if you choose to go through history carefully, beginning from the time when Christian Rosenkreuz founded the Rosicrucian Society late in the fourteenth century—you will find on every occasion, towards the close of the century, a new

ray of light is shed forth. Towards the close of the last century—I do not mean the one to which we belong, but the century before, the eighteenth—a mighty effort was made, of which the burden fell upon two great personages closely connected with the Lodge, though neither of them, I believe, at that time was a Master—he who was then known as the Comte de St Germain, who is now one of the Masters, and his colleague in that great task, closely allied to him, of a noble Austrian family, known to us in later days as H.P.B. When those made their attempt to change the face of Europe, they failed, the time not being ripe; the misery and the wretchedness of the epoch, the degradation of the masses of the population, the horrible poverty, the shameful starvation, all these were the rocks on which split, and was broken up into foam, the spiritual wave of which those two personages were the crest. The karma of that, for the one whom we know of as H.P.B., was the trying and suffering incarnation that she spent amongst us, when she founded, under the order of her Master, the Theosophical Society, and gave her life to it that it might live. And it was that fact, that the last great spiritual effort had been drowned in bloodshed, it was that which gave her her marked horror of mixing up the spiritual movement with a political effort, which made her realise that before a spiritual movement could be successful in the outer world it must shape, raise, remodel the conscience of those who were affected by it, that it must not dare to put its hand as a whole to any great political or social movement before it was strong enough to control the forces which it evoked. Hence

her shrinking from all idea of this Society plunging, as a Society, into political work or social reform. Not that individuals of the Society might not do it, not that members of it might not use their best thought and energy in order to bring forward and strengthen any movement which was really for the benefit of mankind; but that the Society as a Society, as the vehicle of this great torrent of life, must not pour that torrent into any physical and earthly vessel, lest again it should break the vessel into pieces, lest again it should put the hands of the clock back, instead of forward, as was done in France. So for this time it was to be a spiritual movement, and the work was to be spiritual, intellectual, and ethical. Those were to be its special marks, this its special work; and when the two great Teachers who were identified with the movement—her own Master and His closest co-worker in the Great White Lodge, the two who over and over again in centuries gone by had stood side by side as fellow-workers in the civilisations of the past—when They volunteered for this great emprise, doubt, as I said, arose among Their peers. The lesson of the eighteenth century was not forgotten; the question inevitably arose: "Is the West ready for a movement of this sort again? Can it be carried on in such an environment without doing, perhaps, more harm than the good which it is capable of accomplishing?" And so, much discussion arose—strange as that may sound to some, in connection with a body of workers so sublime—and most were against it, and declared the time was not ripe; but these two offered to take the risk and bear the burden, offered to bear the karma of the effort,

and to throw their lives into the shaping, guiding, and uplifting. And as the question of time is always one of the most complicated and difficult questions for Those who have to deal with the great law of cycles and the evolution of man, it was felt that it was possible that the effort might succeed, even although the time was not quite ripe, the clock had not quite struck the hour. And so permission was given, and the two assumed the responsibility. How the earlier stages were made is familiar to you all; how they chose that noble worker Their disciple, known to us as H.P.B., and prepared her for the work she had to do; how in due course They sent her to America to search there for a comrade who would supply what was lacking in herself—the power of organisation, the power of speaking to men and gathering them around him, and shaping them into a movement in the outer world. And you all know the story of how they met; you all know how they joined hands together. One of them has put the whole thing on record, for the instruction of the younger members of the Society now and in centuries to come. The movement began, as you know, closely watched over, constantly protected by those two who had taken this burden of responsibility upon Themselves. And you may read in many of H.P.B.'s letters, how continual in those days was the touch, how constant the directions; and it went on thus year after year—for the first seven years at least of the Society's life, and a little more; you may read in the issue of the *Theosophist* (June) a letter from one of these same Teachers, showing how close was the interest taken, how close the scrutiny which was kept up in all the

details of the Society's work. In publishing that letter I thought it only right to strike out the names which occur in the original. It would not be right or fair to print those publicly yet, as you can perfectly well see when you are able to supply the blanks which are left for names. You may read in that letter how the Master who wrote it had been watching the action of a particular branch, how He had marked in connection with another branch some of the members of the branch who were working ill or not well; how He pointed out that such-and-such members would be better out of the branch than in it, were hinderers rather than helpers—all going to show how close was the watch which They then kept upon the branches of Their infant Society. And so again you may read in other letters than that, suggestions of writing letters to newspapers, and so on, which would strike you as very trivial if they came from the Masters at the present time; how a letter might be written here, an article answered there; how a leading article ought not to be allowed to remain with its false suggestions to the injury of the Society, and so on. But there came a time, with the increase of the numbers in the Society, when many came in who had not the strong belief of the outer founders in the reality of the life of the Masters and Their connection with the Theosophical Society, and disputes and arguments arose. And if you turn back to the *Theosophist* of those days you will see a great deal of discussion going on as to who were the Brothers, and what They did, and what relation they bore to the Society, and so on; until at last They grew a little weary of this continual challenging of Their life, and work, and interest,

and gave the warning which still exists amongst the papers of the Society, that unless before a very short time these questions were set at rest, and the fact of Their relation to the Society was generally recognised, They would withdraw again for a time into the silence in which They had remained so long, and would wait until conditions were more favorable before they again took Their active part in the guiding of the Society's work. Unfortunately the warning was not taken, and so the withdrawal into the comparative silence took place, and the Society entered on that other cycle of its work on which, as you know, the judgment of the Master was passed in the quotation I made the other day, that "the Society has liberated itself from our grasp and influence, and we have let it go; we make no unwilling slaves. It is now a soulless corpse, a machine run so far well enough, but which will fall to pieces when Out of the three objects, the second alone is attended to; it is no longer either a Brotherhood, nor a body over the face of which broods the Spirit from beyond the great Range." Thus Their relations to the Society of the time altered, became less direct, less continual. Their direct influence was confined to individuals and withdrawn for the Society at large, save as to general strengthening, not because They desired it should be so, but because so the Society desired, and the Society is master of its own destiny, and may shape its own fate according to the will of its majority. Still They watched over it, though not permitted to "interfere" with its outer working so much as They had done in the earlier days, and H.P.B. was obliged to declare that They did not direct it. The relation remained, but was

largely in abeyance, latent to some extent, as we may say, and They were waiting for the time when again the possibility might open before Them of more active work within the movement which They had started, whose heavy karma They were compelled to bear.

The fact that They bear the karma of the Society as a whole, seems to me one which members of the Society ought never to forget; for, coming into this movement as we have done, finding through the Society the teachings which have changed our lives, having received from it the light which has made all our thought different, which has rendered life intelligible, and life on other planes familiar, at least in theory, and to some in practice, it would seem that the very commonest gratitude, such as men or women of the world might feel for some small benefactions shown by friend to friend, that even that feeling, small and poor as it is, might live in the heart of every member towards Those who have made the existence of the Theosophical Society possible. I do not mean, of course, in those who do not believe in the fact of Their existence; and there are, quite rightly and properly, many such amongst us; for it is the foundation of the Theosophical Society that men of all opinions may come within its ranks and benefit by the splendor of its teachings, whether or not they accept them one by one. Their non-belief does not alter the fact that the teachings come to them through the Society, and from Those who made the Society a living organism upon earth. Nor do I mean in saying that this feeling of gratitude should exist in the heart of each, that anyone need take the particular view

of the Masters which I myself take, founding that view, it may be, on more knowledge than very many of those who reject it personally can be said to possess. In all these matters every member is free, and I am only urging upon you your responsibility at least to try to understand, where you touch matters of such far-reaching importance; and at least to consider that you should not add to the burden on those mighty shoulders more than you can avoid adding. Now none of us, whatever we may happen to know—the differences of knowledge between us are trivial as compared with the difference between all of us and Them—can surely escape the duty of considering whether by his own ignorance, and carelessness, and folly, and indifference, he is adding to that burden which They bear. For They cannot avoid taking the karma that you and I largely generate, by virtue of Their unity with this Society, and the fact that Their life circulates through it, and that They have sacrificed Themselves in order that it may live. By that sacrifice they cannot avoid sharing the karma that you and I are making by every careless thought, by every foolish action, by every wilful or even not wilful ignorance, the burden that They have taken out of love for man and for his helping. And I have often thought, when I have been trying dimly to understand the mysteries of this divine compassion, and the greatness of the love and of the pity which moves those mighty Ones to mix themselves up with our small, petty selves, I have often thought how strange must seem to Them, from Their position, the indifference with which we take such priceless blessings, the indifference with which we accept such

mighty sacrifice. For the love that These deserve at our hands is surely beyond all claim of kindred, of blood, of touch between man and man; the claim that They have upon us, these Men who are Masters and Teachers, for what They have given and made possible for you and me, seems to me a claim beyond all measuring, a debt beyond all counting. And when one looks at the Society as a whole, and realises how little as a whole it takes account of those deep occult truths into touch with which it has come, how little it realises how mighty the possibility that these supreme acts of sacrifice have opened before every one of us, it seems almost too sad to be credible, too pathetic to be expressed; one realises how sometimes Their hearts must be wrung, as the heart of the Christ was wrung when He stood and looked over Jerusalem, and knew that the people to whose race He belonged were driving further and further away their possibilities, and were despising that which He had brought for their redemption. How often His cry: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thee together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not"—how often must that same cry go out from the heart of the Masters, when They look at the movement for which They are responsible, and realise how little its greatness is understood by those who are its members, and are reckoned within its pale.[1] For if even for one brief hour you could

[1] This was spoken some weeks before the issue of Mr Sinnett's extraordinary manifesto, denying "the things most surely believed among us."

realise the heart of the Master, and what He feels and knows with regard to this movement which is His, it seems to me that in the light of even that brief meditation there would be a throwing away of personalities, there would be a trampling down of silly pride, a casting aside of careless obstinacy, a yearning to have some share in the sacrifice, and to give ourselves, however petty we may be, side by side with that sublime sacrifice which They are making year after year for us, unworthy of Their compassion. And yet nothing less than that is the movement which lives by Their life; nothing less than that is the relation of the Masters to the Theosophical Society. They bear it in Their heart, They bear it on Their shoulders, They offer daily sacrifice that this spiritual effort may succeed in the helping and the uplifting of the world. And They, so great, speak to us, so small; and none will surely refuse to listen who catches one glimpse of the possibility of Their speech; none will reject Their pleading, who can hear one whisper of that Voice; and the one thing that one hopes for, that one longs for, with regard to oneself and to all who are members of the Society, is that amongst us there may be some ears found to hear the voice of the Masters, and some hearts mirroring enough of their compassion to at least sacrifice themselves for the helping of the world.

The Future of the Theosophical Society

THERE are two futures of the Theosophical Society to which we may address our attention: the immediate future, and a future further off. And I am going to begin with the future further off, because it is only by recognising the nature of that future that we can properly devise the means whereby we may bring it about. For in all human affairs it is necessary to choose an end to which effort should be directed, and the nature of the end will govern the nature of the means. One of the great faults, I think, of our modern life is to live in what is called a hand-to-mouth way, to snatch at any momentary advantage, to try to bring about something which serves as an improvement for the moment without trying to understand, without caring to consider, whether in very many cases the temporary improvement may not bring with it a more fatal mischief than that which it is intended to remedy. And at least in the Theosophical Society, where we try to study tendencies, and to understand something of the forces which are working around us in life, we ought to avoid this popular blunder of the

time, we ought to try to see the goal towards which we are moving, and to choose our immediate methods with reference to that goal. Of course, when I speak of a goal and an end, I am using the terms in a relative, not in an absolute sense—the goal, the end which is within a measurable distance, and so may be taken as a point towards which the roads on which we travel should tend. Let us, then, look first on that goal, and see its nature and the kind of methods which will help to realise it upon earth.

You are all familiar in the Theosophical Society with the theory of cycles, so that you are accustomed to look upon events as tending to repeat themselves on higher and higher levels of what has been called the "spiral of evolution." For while it is true that history does not repeat itself upon the same level, it is also true that it does repeat itself upon successively higher levels, and that anyone who is studying Theosophical teaching as to the evolution of man, the evolution of globes, the evolution of systems, the evolution of universes, may very much facilitate his study by grasping the main truths which underlie each of these in turn. We are continually repeating on a higher plane that which we have done upon a lower. Our terms are a constant series of repetitions, so that if we understand their meaning in one series we are able to argue to their meaning in another. And I have often pointed out to you with respect to these recurring cycles of events, and recurring terms, that especially among Hinḍus, and in the Samskṛiṭ language, you find whole series of terms, the meaning of each of which varies with the term from

which the series starts; so that if you know them once, you know them for all occasions. Take a very familiar case. Let me remind you of the word "samâḍhi." That is a relative term, and is the last of a series, which has regard to the waking consciousness of the individual and the plane on which the centre of the waking consciousness is found. So that before you can say what the word "samâḍhi" means for any individual, you must ascertain on what plane of consciousness his normal centre is at work; and when you know that, then you can pass up step by step until you come to the term in the series which is represented by that word "samâḍhi." It is the same over and over again in our Theosophical studies, and especially do we find this to be true in the characteristics — important in this particular relation — the characteristics of the great Races, the Root-Races, as represented in miniature in the sub-races of each Root-Race. If we can find out those characteristics, trace them and see how they are brought about in the course of evolution in the small cycle which is nearer to us, the cycle of the sub-race, then it is comparatively easy for us, as regards the future, to foresee the appearance of those characteristics in the Root-Race that corresponds to the sub-race. And I shall want to use that method in dealing with the future of the Society; it is for that reason that I draw your attention to these continually recurring cycles of times and events. Now if we look back to the Fourth Root-Race, we can study in the history of that Race the evolution of the Fifth. We can see the methods used to bring about that evolution. We can trace the means which were employed in order

that that evolution might be made secure; and we can see, by studying that which lies behind us, that the fourth sub-race of that Root-Race showed out the characteristics of the Fourth Race as a whole; that the fifth sub-race of that Fourth showed out some of the characteristics of the Fifth Root-Race that was to follow in the course of evolution. And in this way, applying the analogy, if we can trace out to some extent for ourselves the characteristics of the sixth sub-race which is to succeed our own fifth sub-race, then we shall be on the track of the line of evolution which will bring about the Sixth Root-Race when the time for its coming strikes. Let us glance back for a moment to see the main points of the evolution of a sub-race and a Race.

When our own Fifth Root-Race was to be evolved, certain types were chosen out of the fifth sub-race of the Fourth Root-Race, and they were chosen by the Manu who was to guide the evolution of the Fifth Root-Race. Those types showed out in a comparatively germinal fashion the mental characteristics which were to grow out of the selected groups. And you may learn, if you care to do it, how those choices were made, and how the first choice was a failure. Chosen as it was by the wisdom of the highly exalted being whom we speak of as the Manu, none the less the material in which He tried to work proved too stubborn, too little plastic, to adapt itself to His influence striving to shape and to mould it. And in consequence, after prolonged efforts, He threw aside the families that thus He had selected, and began making a new choice, a fresh selection, in order to see if the second choice would prove more fortunate than the first. And

the way He chose them was a simple and effective one: He selected a certain number of His own disciples and sent them out as messengers to the various nations of the world, that constituted that part of the great Fourth Race which He had chosen for His second experiment. He sent them into nation after nation, with the mission to gather out of that nation those who appeared to be the most promising for the work which He had to carry out. They tried in various fashions, sometimes by direct invitation, where the characteristic that was being sought was clearly developed, namely, the lower mind. It was the development of the lower manas that was the keynote of the selection; for the Fifth Root-Race was to show out that development of the lower manas. I say "lower manas" rather than "manas"; because the full development of the mânasic principle in man is reserved for the Fifth Round, and not for the Fourth, and we, of course, are still in the Fourth Round. That Fourth Round, pre-eminently kâmic, must necessarily color every evolution which goes on during its existence, and high as we may strive to raise mânasic powers amongst us, we cannot escape from the fundamental vice of our birth, from the mânasic standpoint, that we are plunged in kâmic matter, and that the matter in which we work is matter of the Fourth Round, adapted to the kâmic principle, and not matter of the Fifth, adapted to the mânasic. Hence the best thing that we can do is to evolve the lower manas, manas deeply tinged with kâma. Out of that Fourth Race, then, were selected the people who showed most plainly the budding of this intelligence which was needed, the messengers

of the Manu striking a note which attracted those in whom this lower mânasic principle was more highly developed than among their comrades and peers. Gradually from different nations groups of men and women gathered round the messengers of the Manu, who then began to lead them away from their own people, from their own nation, from all their surroundings, in order to seek the appointed place where the Manu was grouping those on whom the great experiment was to be made for the second time. Slowly and gradually they were thus gathered together out of the nations into which the fifth sub-race of the Fourth Race had spread. And the flower of those nations, attracted by the key-note struck by the messengers, gradually gathered round the Manu, and became the material, the nucleus, of the new Root Race. As you know, He took them far away to the Sacred Land, shutting them away from the masses of the Fourth and Third Race peoples, and dividing them by physical barriers from all that might contaminate and stain. Very, very different were those people from the generations which thousands upon thousands of years later were to spring from them in physical succession; rather, to the people about them were they folk who were developed in an uncongenial fashion, people who were by no means looked up to and admired in the nations amongst whom they dwelt, amongst whom they had grown up. For the building of a new type is not made out of those in whom the type of the old Race, that which is before those who are selected for a changed line of evolution, has flowered. The triumphs of evolution in the Fourth Race, as the

Fourth Race judged them, were by no means the best material for the building of the Fifth. Those who were most admired in the Fourth, those who were regarded as the flowers of their own nations, were those in whom the kâmic faculty, with its allied psychic powers, was most developed, was most triumphant. For you must remember that in the very different civilisation of those days, psychic powers were playing an enormous part in all the most highly developed people of the time. Where the dawning principle of manas began somewhat to triumph over the kâmic, there the psychic faculties inevitably diminished in their power, and showed themselves very much more feebly than in the leaders of the time, those who were the pioneers of the civilisation of the day. The faculties most valued at that time were least to be recognised in those who were the chosen of the Manu; for what He was seeking was the dawn of the intellectual principle, and where that dawns, the psychic for a time is submerged. I cannot dwell now on the reason for that; the psychism of the time was the psychism of the whole of the astral body, and not the psychism which succeeds the intellectual development, which is the result of a higher organisation of that body into special organs of astral senses—the well-known chakras. The reason is well known among all students of the different stages of evolution, and the only reason I allude to it now is because I want you to recognise a very significant fact: that those who were chosen out of that civilisation by the Manu, in order that he might make a new Race out of them, were not the people who were the leading examples of the highest civilisation of

the time. Those were left behind in their own environment. Those were left behind to carry on their evolution along the lines already becoming the lines of the past, and not the lines of the future. And these people in whom the psychic powers were less shown, and in whom the less valued intellectual power was germinating, on lines more fitted for the development in future, they were chosen out for the building of the Fifth Race, and carried away from their Fourth Race surroundings into the far-off land of their education. There of course they remained until the time came when the Manu incarnated amongst them—and so on. That is old history on which I need not dwell.

Let us apply those same principles to the choosing out of another Root-Race, and we shall see that just as then, for the fifth Root-Race, the mânasic principle was selected, so in the choosing out for a Sixth Root-Race, the buḍḍhic principle must be the one which must be sought for in order that the material may be shaped in which it will be possible for it in its turn to develop. There again I must remind you that the buḍḍhi of the Sixth Root-Race in this Round will be something very different from the evolution of the pure buḍḍhic principle in its own Round, the Round that belongs to it in the future evolution of humanity: it will be buḍḍhic contaminated with kâma, showing out much of the kâmic characteristics—inevitably, inasmuch as it must work in kâmic matter. Hence you must not take quite your ideal buḍḍhi, such as you may fancy it in its perfection—the magnificent principle of Pure Reason, in its higher intuitive power—but a shadow, a reflexion of it, such

a shadow and reflexion as is able to take its veils, its garments, from the matter of our own Round. None the less, that will be the distinguishing, the dominant principle of the Sixth Root-Race, and therefore I ask you to fix your mind on that as the goal towards which all roads in the present should tend. Far-off indeed it is, counting as we count time; but tendencies show themselves long, long before they appear upon the surface, recognisable to the eye of the flesh. In each sub-race appears a principle which manifests itself more fully, more thoroughly, in the corresponding Root-Race; and therefore, though it will only be possible for us at the present time to work towards the next sub-race of our own Fifth Race, which is already beginning to appear upon the surface of our globe, none the less is it true that in quickening the evolution of that sub-race it is the next Root-Race to which we must look for our guiding principle; that is the far-off Pole-star by which we must guide our ships at the present time, that the point towards which we must steer, however far off we must sorrowfully admit that it is.

Let us then, recognising that fact, that the Sixth Root-Race will be the embodiment of the next principle in us, the buḍḍhic principle, that of Pure Reason—as distinguished from Intellect, which is Reason reflected in Activity—when you realise that, and remember that the note of buḍḍhi is union—not yet unity but union—you *will find that as much as you require* for your guiding principle in the evolution of the corresponding sub-race, whose foot is now on the threshold. So that in this fashion, though seeming to go so far abroad into the

past and the future, I bring you to the practical question of the next step forward in human evolution.

The next thing you must remember is that the flowering of the Fifth Root-Race will go on long, long after the beginning of the sixth sub-race is seen. For these Races and sub-races overlap each other; and just as at the present time the majority of mankind belongs to the Fourth Root-Race and not to the Fifth, but the Fifth Root-Race dominates the evolution of the world, although still in a minority, so is it of sub-races also. The sixth sub-race will be at first in an almost inappreciable minority, but coloring the whole; then multiplying more and more, until it becomes an appreciable minority. Then, as it grows more and more numerous, and nations are born of it, it will begin to dominate and lead the civilisation of the then world. But even then the Fifth Race will be in an enormous majority for ages and ages yet to come. The fifth sub-race has not yet touched its highest point, has not yet asserted itself to the point to which its evolution will reach in the centuries that lie immediately before us. It is nearing its highest point; it is climbing rapidly now to its zenith; but still many years of mortal time intervene between the present day and the day when it will rule in the height of its power. It is climbing fast in these days; but still, compare it with the corresponding point in the Atlantean civilisation, and you will realise that it has not yet climbed to its highest point. For every Race must overtop the Race that has gone before it, and we have not yet reached even the level of the old Atlantis in knowledge, and therefore in power over the lower nature, although, as I

said, the climbing now is rapid, and will become more and more rapid with every ten years that pass over our heads. For there is that speciality in evolution, that it ever goes forward at an increasing rate. The more it develops its powers, the more swiftly do those powers multiply themselves; so that, to quote a well-known phrase of a great Teacher, "it grows not by additions but by powers." And this civilisation of ours will rush forward more and more rapidly with every decade that passes. Still, the very fact that it has not reached the highest levels of the Fourth tells you that time lies before us in the building of the sixth sub-race, and that is our immediate work. We need not trouble now any further about the Sixth Root-Race; for whatever builds the sixth sub-race amongst us is contributing to the building of that Root-Race of the future. The same faculties are demanded, although then at a higher level, and we can come down to our humbler level and consider what the sixth sub-race is to be. And in that we shall realise the work and the future of the Theosophical Society.

The great characteristic of that Race is to be union, and all that tends to union is a force which is working for the coming of that sub-race, no matter whether very often the force looked at from without is often repellent. It is not the outer manifestation of the moment, but the tendency, the direction of the force which is important. There may be many things, more beautiful on the surface, which have accomplished their aim, and are on the downward path towards decay, whilst the things that are rising, still below the horizon, have, as all germinal

things have, much about them that is repellent and that will be used up in the growth of the coming creature, before it really manifests upon earth. It has been said by a Master that if we could see with the eye of the Spirit the generation of the human being, his ante-natal life, we should understand the generation of worlds, the generation of universes. And that, again, is a general principle. Let us see one or two lessons that we may draw from it at the moment.

Take the evolution of a seed into a plant, and what do you find? A tiny germ surrounded by a mass of nutrient matter; and before that tiny germ will show itself in root, and stem, and leaf above the ground and become visible to the eye of the observer on the earth, that nutrient material must be absorbed by the growing germ, and changed into the exquisite tissues of the plant that is to be. And so, if you take the growing germ, animal or human, how unlike is that budding creature from the animal or the man that shall be! How lacking in beauty in many of the methods of its growth, of its nutrition, of its gradual shaping! And by what marvellous alchemy of inspiring life does the living germ gather into itself all the nutrient matter that surrounds it, and shapes it into organ after organ, until the perfect creature is ready to be born into the world. And as in these cases, so with the growth of a sub-race, of which the germ is planted now. How much has to be done before it is ready for the birth-hour, that yet is at a measurable distance from the moment that the germ is planted in the womb of time. Try to realise the analogy by means of the image that I have suggested, and it will

not then seem so unlikely to you, that which is true, that in our own times again many messengers have come out from the Manu of the future, in order that those messengers may strike certain keynotes, which mark the chief characteristic of the child that is to be. That note is well known at the present time: we call it Brotherhood.

Now notice at the present time how many such messengers are found scattered throughout the world, and how the varied organisations of men of every kind are tending in that direction, and are more and more recognising that as the keynote of their progress and their evolution. There are, so far as I know, only two great organisations at the present time that have deliberately taken Universal Brotherhood as their motto, their cry, in the world: the one is Masonry, the other is the Theosophical Society. Those are the only two which proclaim Universal Brotherhood. For although many religions declare Brotherhood, they do not make it universal; it is a Brotherhood within the limits of their own creed, and a man to become a brother must come within the limits of the religion. See how clearly that is declared in the great and universal baptismal ceremony which marks the entrance of the child into the Christian Church. In that sacrament he is "*made* a child of God." He was not a child of God before, from the Church standpoint. He was born under the wrath of God, in the kingdom of Satan. In the ceremony of baptism he is made a child of God, an heir of the kingdom of heaven; and that is the keynote of the Churches everywhere: those outside are not children of God. And you must remember that it is that Fatherhood

of God which connotes the Brotherhood of man. Only by the rooting in the Father-Life is the Brother-Life intelligible. And because the Theosophical Society knows no limit of creed, no limit of religion, and declares that every human being is, in his own essential nature, one with the Supreme Life and the Supreme God, because of that its Brotherhood is universal, and knows none as outside its pale. Every man, no matter what he is, is recognised as brother. He comes not into the Brotherhood, nor can he be cast out from it. His Spirit, his Life, places him in it: it is a fact beyond us, above us. We have no power either to create it or to destroy. We recognise the great fact, and we do not call ourselves the Universal Brotherhood, but only a nucleus in it—a very different thing; the Brotherhood is as universal as humanity, that is our fundamental doctrine, and it implies that Brotherhood is as universal as Life. So also with Masonry, where it is rightly seen and understood—no barriers of creed, all men equally welcome within the Masonic Lodge. I say "where rightly understood," for there are lands where Masonry has spread, where the Lodge has become exclusive as the creed has become exclusive; and among American Masons, I believe, the negro, as negro, is not admitted into the Masonic Lodge. But that is the denial of Masonry, a disgrace to it, and not a triumph. And although it be true that Masonry has lost widely its knowledge, it still for the most part remains a Brotherhood, and in that it has in it the link of a life that will not die, and that has every possibility of revival throughout the earth.

Quite outside these two, limited brotherhoods are proclaimed in every direction now. The Church asserts it within its own limits. All religions assert it within their respective limitations. Outside religions and churches the same cry is heard. Socialism declares it, and tries to build its policy upon it. Everywhere this cry of Brotherhood is heard, although it has not yet been lived, and that is one of the signs of the coming birth of the sub-race, in which Brotherhood shall be the dominant note of its every civilisation, and in which a civilisation that is not brotherly, in which there are ignorant people, and poor people, and starving people, and diseased people, will be looked at as barbarous, and not really as civilisation at all. Its note is Brotherhood, the dominant note of the coming day. And because we have taken that as our first object, we have a right to call ourselves a nucleus thereof; and because we definitely recognise it, we can consciously co-operate with nature. That is the real strength of our Movement —not our numbers, they are comparatively small, but our conscious working with the forces that make for the future. The Theosophical Society is a fragment of the vast Theosophical Movement which is surging upon every side around us; but this we have that enables us to be on the crest of that great wave, that we know for what we are working, we understand the tendencies which make for the future. Hence in our Theosophical Society we must above all else hold up this word, and work for it in every phase of human activity. That word marks out for your Theosophical Lodges what movements you should help, and what movements you should

not help. It is no use to pour water into a broken vessel, and every vessel that has not on it the name or the principle of Brotherhood is a broken vessel that will not hold water for the coming time. But every movement, however mingled with ignorance, with folly, with temporary mischief, which seeks after Brotherhood and strives to realise it, is a living vessel, into which the Water of Life may be poured; and with those movements you should work, trying to inspire and to purify, to get rid of that which comes from ignorance, and to replace it with the wisdom which it is your sacred duty to spread abroad among the children of men. So that in your public work you have this great keynote.

And that leads me to pause for a moment on that spreading Socialist Movement that you see around you on every side. Now, it is making one tremendous blunder that I need not dwell on here, but that I shall dwell on to-morrow night in addressing a Socialist Society. They are forgetting the very root of progress, they are forgetting the building of brothers, out of which to build a Brotherhood hereafter. They think that the future depends on economic conditions, on who holds land, and who holds capital. These conditions are conditions to be discussed carefully, to be worked out intellectually. But whatever ownership you have of any of the means of life, if the life is poisoned, it cannot be healthy in the midst even of a well-arranged society. For society grows out of men, and not men out of society, and until that is realised all schemes must fail, for they are founded on sand, and not on rock. You who have studied and understand, to some small extent

at least, the powers which are working in the world of the present, you ought to be able to help to eliminate the evil and to strengthen the good. And the Theosophical Society, among these movements of the day, must hold up firmly a true ideal. It is the function of the prophet, of the spiritual teacher, to hold up the ideal, and point ever towards it, so that individuals may have it ever before their eyes and choose the roads which lead in the right direction.

And again, the principles that I have put to you may explain to you why this Theosophical Society, so weak, is yet so strong—weak in its numbers, weak in the qualifications of its members, not numbering amongst its adherents the most learned and the most mighty of the earth, made up of very mediocre, average people, not the great leaders of the civilisation of the day; but in them all, else would they not be members of the Theosophical Society, is the dawning aspiration after a nobler condition, and some willingness to sacrifice themselves in order that the coming of that condition may be quickened upon earth. That is the justification of our Society now. We are like the nutrient material that surrounds the germ, and the germ grows out of the love, and the aspiration, and the spirit of self-sacrifice, which are found in our movement, however little developed to-day. And the fact that we recognise it as duty, as ideal, is the promise for the future. We are what our past has made us; we shall be what our present is creating; and if within your heart and mine the longing for the nobler state is found, that marks our place in the future, and our right to be among the

earlier members of the sub-race that is now preparing to be born. For our thoughts now are what we shall be in our next life; our aspirations now mark our capacities then. You know how the intermediate life is spent, between the death that will close your present lives and the birth that will open the portal of your next lives. You know that in the heavenly places you will be weaving into faculty, into capacity, every thought and every aspiration towards the higher life which in these days of your weakness you are generating, and are trying to cherish and cultivate. It is not you as you are who will make the future, but you as you shall be, self-created from your aspirations now. And just in proportion as each of you nourishes those aspirations, and cherishes those ideals, and tries, however feebly, to work them out amid the limitations of your past which cramps your present life, just so far will you, in the interval between death and birth, make the nobler faculties which shall qualify you to be born in the sixth sub-race upon earth. That should be your keynote in your lives now, that the inspiring motive, the controlling power. And if you want to assure yourselves that that sub-race is on the threshold, as I said, then look at the world around you, and measure the change which is coming over it. I said we were weak in numbers, that we are only average and mediocre people; but what about the spread of our ideas? What about the way in which, during the last thirty years, these Theosophical ideas have spread through this Fifth Race civilisation, have permeated its literature, are beginning to guide its science, are beginning to inspire its art? That is the proof of the strength of

the force, despite the feebleness of the vehicles in which that force is playing. Very clearly not to you nor to me is the spread of these ideas due, but to the Mighty Ones behind the Society, who give the forces in which we are lacking. For the whole Movement is Theirs; They are working outside as well as within. And Their outside working shows itself in the innumerable movements which are all tending in the same direction. It is not we who have spread the ideas. The ideas are scattered in the mental atmosphere around us, and our only merit is that we caught them up a little more quickly than other people, and realise that they are a part of the Eternal Wisdom. That is our only claim, our only prerogative—consciously, deliberately we choose these ideas, and however weakly we carry them out, none the less the choice has been made and registered in the books of Destiny. For whether you will or not, you must grow in the direction of your thought; and you cannot be part of this Movement without your thought being more or less colored by the Theosophical ideal.

People often say: "Why should I come into the Theosophical Society? You give us your books. You spread your knowledge broadcast everywhere. I can buy it in the book-shops. I can hear it in the lectures. Why should I come in?" And I always say: "There is no reason why you should come in, if you do not wish to come. Take everything we can give, and take it freely. You are more than welcome to it. We are only trustees for you. And if you do not care to be among the pioneers, by all means stay outside, and walk along the smoother paths which others have carved out for

you." But there is one reason that I may say to you—I do not say it to those outside—there is a reason why you should be within it. You are more in touch with the forces that make the future. You are surrounded, bathed, in the atmosphere in which the future shall grow. All that is good in you is nourished by those forces. All that is harmonious with them is strengthened by their overmastering might. You cannot be amongst us without sharing that inspiration; you cannot be a member without sharing the life which is poured out unstinted through all the vessels of the Theosophical Society. Outside it is not worth while to say this, for that is not a reason for inducing people to come in; but you may rejoice that good karma in the past has brought you into the Society in the present. It has given you the right to have this opportunity of a nobler birth in the coming time, has given you the opportunity of taking part in that great work which is beginning to be wrought among humanity. It gives you, from your life in the heavenly places, touch with powers and opportunities that belong to these ideals in the world of men, and it gives you the possibility there of touch with the Mighty Ones whom here, however unworthily, we strive to follow. So that it is a great thing to be within it, and it means much for the future of you, if you can keep in it. For the immediate future of the Theosophical Society is the work of building that next sub-race which is to come. That is the work for which consciously it ought to be working now. In proportion as you realise it, so will be the strength of your labor; in proportion as you understand it, so should be your share in the gladder

work of that happier time. For the future of the Theosophical Society is to be the mother, and even the educator, of the child sixth sub-race which already is going through its ante-natal life. That is its future, secure, inevitable; yours the choice if you will share that future or not.

Part III

The Value of Theosophy in the World of Thought

An Address on taking office as President of the Theosophical Society. Delivered at the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, London, W., on 10th July 1907.

The Value of Theosophy in the World of Thought

You will have seen on the handbill announcing the lecture, that we are holding this meeting in connection with my taking office as President of the Theosophical Society, and it is my purpose, in addressing you to-night, to try to show you, at least to some small extent, what is the value which the Society represents, as regarded from the standpoint of human activities, manifested in the world of thought. I want to try to show you that when we say THEOSOPHY we are speaking of something of real value which can serve humanity in the various departments of intellectual life. I propose, in order to do this, to begin with a very brief statement of the fundamental idea of Theosophy; and then, turning to the world of religious thought, to the world of artistic thought, to the world of scientific thought, and lastly to the world of political thought, to point out to you how that which is called Theosophy may bring contributions of value to each of these in turn.

Now Theosophy, as the name implies, is a Wisdom, a Divine Wisdom; and the name historically, as many of

you know, is identical with that which in Eastern lands has been known by various names—as Tao, in China; as the Brahmavidyâ, in India; as the Gnosis, among the Greeks and the early Christians; and as Theosophy through the Middle Ages and in modern times. It implies always a knowledge, a Wisdom that transcends the ordinary knowledge, the ordinary science of the earth; it implies a wisdom as regards life, a wisdom as regards the essential nature of things, a wisdom which is summed up in two words when we say "God-Wisdom." For it has been held in elder days—although in modern times it has become largely forgotten—that man can really never know anything at all unless he knows himself, and knows himself Divine; that knowledge of God, the Supreme, the Universal Life, is the root of all true knowledge of matter as well as of Spirit, of this world as well as of worlds other than our own; that in that one supreme knowledge all other knowledges find their root; that in that supreme light all other lights have their origin; and that if man can know anything, it is because he is Divine in nature, and, sharing the Life that expresses itself in a universe, he can know at once the Life that originates and the Matter that obeys.

Starting from such a standpoint, you will at once realise that Theosophy is a spiritual theory of the world as against a materialistic. It sees Spirit as the moulder, the shaper, the arranger of matter, and matter only as the obedient expression and servant of the Spirit; it sees in man a spiritual being, seeking to unfold his powers by experience in a universe of forms; and it declares that man misunderstands himself, and will fail of his true

end, if he identifies himself with the form that perishes instead of with the life which is deathless. Hence, opposed to materialism alike in science and philosophy, it builds up a spiritual conception of the universe, and necessarily it is idealistic in its thought, and holds up the importance of the ideal as a guide to all human activity. The ideal, which is thought applied to conduct, that is the keynote of Theosophy and its value in the varied worlds of thought; and the power of thought, the might of thought, the ability that it has to clothe itself in forms whose life only depends on the continuance of the thought that gave them birth, that is its central note, or keynote, in all the remedies that it applies to human ills. Idealist everywhere, idealist in religion, idealist in art, idealist in science, idealist in the practical life that men call politics, idealist everywhere; but avoiding the blunder into which some idealists have fallen, when they have not recognised that human thought is only a portion of the whole, and not the whole. The Theosophist recognises that the Divine Thought, of which the universe is an expression, puts limitations on his own power of thought, on his own creative activity. He realises that the whole compels the part, and that his own thought can only move within the vast circle of the Divine Thought, which he only partially expresses; so that while he will maintain that on the ideal depends all that is called "real" in the lower worlds, he will realise that his creative power can only slowly mould matter to his will, and though every result will depend on a creative thought, the results will often move slowly, adapting themselves to the thought that gives them birth. Hence, while

idealist, he is not impracticable; while he sees the power of thought, he recognises its limitations in space and time; and while asserting the vital importance of right thought and right belief, he realises that only slowly does the flower of thought ripen into the fruit of action.

But on the importance of thought he lays a stress unusual in modern life. It is the cant of the day, in judging the value of a man, that "it does not matter what he believes but only what he does." That is not true. It matters infinitely what a man believes; for as a man's belief so he is; as a man's thought, so inevitably is his action. There was a time in the world of thought when it was said with equal error: "It does not matter what a man does, provided his faith is right." If that word "faith" had meant the man's thought in its integrity, then there would have been but little error; for the right thought would inevitably have brought right action; but in those days right thought meant only orthodox thought, according to a narrow canon of interpretation, the obedient repetition of creeds, the blind acceptance of beliefs imposed by authority. In those days what was called Orthodoxy in religion was made the measure of the man, and judgment depended upon orthodox acquiescence. Against that mistake the great movement that closed the Middle Ages was the protest of the intellect of man, and it was declared that no external authority must bind the intellect, and none had right to impose from outside the thought which is the very essence of the man—that great assertion of the right of private judgment, of the supreme principle of the free intelligence, so necessary for the progress of humanity.

But like all things it has been followed by a reaction, and men have run to the other extreme: that nothing matters except conduct, and action alone is to be considered. But your action is the result of your thought of yesterday, and follows your yesterday as its expression in the outer world; your thought of to-day is your action of to-morrow, and your future depends on its accuracy and its truth, on its consonance with reality. Hence it is all-important in the modern world to give back to thought its right place as above action, as its inspirer and its guide. For the human spirit by its expression as intellect judges, decides, directs, controls. Its activity is the outcome of its thinking; and if without caring for thought you plunge into action, you have the constant experiments, feeble and fruitless, which so largely characterise our modern life.

Pass, then, from that first assertion of the importance of right thinking, to see what message Theosophy has for the world of religious thought. What is religion? Religion is the quenchless thirst of the human spirit for the Divine. It is the Eternal, plunged into a world of transitory phenomena, striving to realise its own eternity. It is the Immortal, flung into a world of death, trying to realise its own deathlessness. It is the white Eagle of Heaven, born in the illimitable spaces, beating its wings against the bars of matter, and striving to break them and rise into the immensities where are its birthplace and its real home. That is religion: the striving of man for God. And that thirst of man for God many have tried to quench with what is called Theology, or with books that are called sacred, traditions that are deemed

holy, ceremonies and rites which are but local expressions of a universal truth. You can no more quench that thirst of the human Spirit by anything but individual experience of the Divine, than you can quench the thirst of the traveller parched and dying in the desert by letting him hear water go down the throat of another. Human experience, and that alone, is the rock on which all religion is founded, that is the rock that can never be shaken, on which every true Church must be built. Books, it is true, are often sacred; but you may tear up every sacred book in the world, and as long as man remains, and God to inspire man, new books can be written, new pages of inspiration can be penned. You may break in pieces every ceremony, however beautiful and elevating, and the Spirit that made them to express himself has not lost his artistic power, and can make new rites and new ceremonies to replace every one that is broken and cast aside. The Spirit is deathless as God is deathless, and in that deathlessness of the Spirit lies the certainty, the immortality of religion. And Theosophy, in appealing to that immortal experience, points the world of religions—confused by many an attack, bewildered by many an assault, half timid before the new truth discovered every day, half scared at the undermining of old foundations, and the tearing by criticism of many documents—points it back to its own inexhaustible source, and bids it fear neither time nor truth, since Spirit is truth and eternity. All that criticism can take from you is the outer form, never the living reality; and well indeed is it for the churches and for the religions of the world that the outworks of documents should be levelled

with the ground, in order to show the impregnability of the citadel, which is knowledge and experience.

But in the world of religious thought there are many services, less important, in truth, than the one I have spoken of, but still important and valuable to the faiths of the world; for Theosophy brings back to men, living in tradition, testimony to the reality of knowledge transcending the knowledge of the senses and the reasoning powers of the lower mind. It comes with its hands full of proof, modern proof, proof of to-day, living witnesses, of unseen worlds, of subtler worlds than the physical. It comes, as the Founders and the early Teachers of every religion have come, to testify again by personal experience to the reality of the unseen worlds of which the religions are the continual witnesses in the physical world. Have you ever noticed in the histories of the great religions how they grow feebler in their power over men as faith takes the place of knowledge, and tradition the place of the living testimony of living men? That is one of the values of Theosophy in the religious world, that it teaches men to travel to worlds unseen, and to bring back the evidence of what they have met and studied; that it so teaches men their own nature that it enables them to separate soul and body, and travel without the physical body in worlds long thought unattainable, save through the gateway of death. I say "Long thought unattainable"; but the scriptures of every religion bear witness that they are not unattainable. The Hiṇdu tells us that man should separate himself from his body as you strip the sheath from the stem of the grass. The Buḍḍhist tells us that by deep thought and contempla-

tion mind may know itself as mind apart from the physical brain. Christianity tells us many a story of the personal knowledge of its earlier teachers, of a ministry of angels that remained in the Church, and of angelic teachers training the neophytes in knowledge. Islâm tells us that its own great prophet himself passed into higher worlds, and brought back the truths which civilised Arabia, and gave knowledge which lit again the torch of learning in Europe when the Moors came to Spain. And so religion after religion bears testimony to the possibility of human knowledge outside the physical world; we only re-proclaim the ancient truth—with this addition, which some religions now shrink from making: that what man did in the past man may do to-day; that the powers of the Spirit are not shackled, that the knowledge of the other worlds is still attainable to man. And outside that practical knowledge of other worlds it brings by that same method the distinct assertion of the survival of the human Spirit after death. It is only in very modern times that that has been doubted by any large numbers of people. Here and there in the ancient world, like a Lucretius in Rome, perhaps; like a Democritus in Greece; certainly like a Châryâka in India, you find one here and there who doubts the deathlessness of the Spirit in man; but in modern days that disbelief, or the hopeless cynicism which thinks knowledge impossible, has penetrated far and wide among the cultured, the educated classes, and from them to the masses of the uneducated. That is the phenomenon of modern days alone, that man by hundreds and by thousands despairs of his own immortality. And yet the deepest conviction

of humanity, the deepest thought in man, is the persistence of himself, the "I" that cannot die. And with one great generalisation, and one method, Theosophy asserts at once the deathlessness of man and the existence of God; for it says to man, as it was ever said in the ancient days: "The proof of God is not without you but within you." All the greatest teachers have reiterated that message, so full of hope and comfort; for it shuts none out from knowledge. What is the method? Strip away your senses, and you find the mind; strip away the mind, and you find the pure reason; strip away the pure reason, and you find the will-to-live; strip away the will-to-live, and you find Spirit as a unit; strike away the limitations of the Spirit, and you find God. Those are the steps: told in ancient days, repeated now. "Lose your life," said the Christ, "and you shall find it to life eternal." That is true: let go everything that you can let go; you cannot let go yourself, and in the impossibility of losing yourself you find the certainty of the Self Universal, the Universal Life.

Pass again from that to another religious point. I mentioned ceremonies, rites of every faith. Those Theosophy looks at and understands. So many have cast away ceremonies, even if they have found them helpful, because they do not understand them, and fear superstition in their use. Knowledge has two great enemies: Superstition and Scepticism. Knowledge destroys blind superstition by asserting and explaining natural truths of which the superstition has exaggerated the unessentials; and it destroys scepticism by proving the reality of the facts of the unseen world. The ceremony,

the rite, is a shadow in the world of sense of the truths in the world of Spirit; and every religion, every creed, has its ceremonies as the outward physical expression of some eternal spiritual truth. Theosophy defends them, justifies them, by explaining them; and when they are understood they cease to be superstitions that blind, and become crutches that help the halting mind to climb to the spiritual life.

Let us pass from the world of religious thought, and pause for a moment on the world of artistic thought. Now to Art, perhaps more than in any other department of the human intelligence, the ideal is necessary for life. All men have wondered from time to time why the architecture—to take one case only—why the architecture of the past is so much more wonderful, so much more beautiful, than the architecture of the present. When you want to build some great national building to-day you have to go back to Greece, or Rome, or the Middle Ages for your model. Why is it that you have no new architecture, expressive of your own time, as that was expressive of the past? The severe order of Egypt found its expression in the mighty temples of Karnak; the beauty and lucidity of Grecian thought bodied itself out in the chaste and simple splendor of Grecian buildings; the sternness of Roman law found its ideal expression in those wondrous buildings whose ruins still survive in Rome; the faith of the Middle Ages found its expression in the upward-springing arch of Gothic architecture, and the exquisite tracery of the ornamented building. But if you go into the Gothic cathedral, what do you find there? That not alone in

wondrous arch and splendid pillar, upspringing in its delicate and slender strength from pavement to roof, not there only did the art of the builder find its expression. Go round to any out-of-the-way corner, or climb the roof of those great buildings, and you will find in unnoticed places, in hidden corners, the love of the artist bodying itself forth in delicate tracery, in stone that lives. Men carved for love, not only for fame; men carved for beauty's sake, not only for money; and they built perfectly because they had love and faith, the two divine builders, and embodied both in deathless stone. Before you can be more than copyists you must find your modern ideal, and when you have found it you can build buildings that will defy time. But you have not found it yet; the artist amongst us is too much of a copyist, and too little of an inspirer and a prophet. We do not want the painter only to paint for us the things our own eyes can see. We want the artist eye to see more than the common eye, and to embody what he sees in beauty for the instruction of our blinded sight. We do not want accurate pictures of cabbages and turnips, and objects of that sort. However cleverly done, they remain cabbages and turnips still. The man who could paint for us the thought that makes the cabbage, he would be the artist, the man who knows the Life. And so for our new Art we must have a splendid ideal. Do you want to know how low Art may sink when materialism triumphs and vulgarises and degrades? Then see that exhibition of French pictures that was placed in Bond Street some years ago, which attracted those who loved indecency more than those who loved the beautiful, and

then you will understand how Art perishes where the breath of the ideal does not inspire and keep alive. And Theosophy to the artist would bring back that ancient reverence which regards the artist of the Beautiful as one of the chief God-revealers to the race of which he is a portion; which sees in the great musical artist, or the sculptor, or the painter, a God-inspired man, bringing down the grace of heaven to illuminate the dull grey planes of earth. The artists should be the prophets of our time, the revealers of the Divine smothered under the material; and were they this, they would be regarded with love and with reverence; for true art needs reverence for its growing, and the artist, of all men—subtle, responsive, sensitive to everything that touches him—needs an atmosphere of love and reverence that he may flower into his highest power, and show the world some glimpse of the Beauty which is God.

And the world of science—perhaps there, after the world of religion, Theosophy has most of value to offer. Take Psychology. What a confusion; what a mass of facts want arrangement; what a chaos of facts out of which no cosmos is built! Theosophy, by its clear and accurate definition of man, of the relation of consciousness to its bodies, of Spirit to its vehicles, arranges into order that vast mass of facts with which psychology is struggling now. It takes into that wonderful "unconscious" or "sub-conscious"—which is now, as it were, the answer to every riddle; but it is not understood—it takes into that the light of direct investigation; divides the "unconscious" which comes from the past from that which is the presage of the future, separates out

the inheritance of our long past ancestry which remains as the "sub-conscious" in us; points to the higher "super-conscious," not "sub-conscious," of which the genius is the testimony at the present time; shows that human consciousness transcends the brain; proves that human consciousness is in touch with worlds beyond the physical; and makes sure and certain the hope expressed by science, that it is possible that that which is now unconscious shall become conscious, and that man shall find himself in touch with a universe and not only in touch with one limited world. That which Myers sometimes spoke of as the "cosmic consciousness," as against our own limited consciousness, is a profound truth, and carries with it the prophecy of man's future greatness. Just as the fish is limited to the water, as the bird is limited to the air, so man has been limited to the physical body, and has dreamed he had no touch with other spaces, to which he really belongs. But your consciousness is living in three worlds, and not in one, is touching mightier possibilities, is beginning to contact subtler phenomena; and all the traces of that are found in your newest psychology, and are simply proofs of those many theories about man which Theosophy has been teaching in the world for many a century, nay, for many a millennium.

And physics and chemistry, is there anything of value along Theosophical lines of thought and investigation, which might aid our physicists and our chemists, puzzled at the subtlety of the forces with which they have to deal? Has it never struck some of the more intuitive physicists and materialists that there may be subtler

senses which may be used for investigation of the subtler forces? That man may have in himself senses by the evolution of which he will able to pierce the secrets that now he is striving vainly to unveil? Has it never even struck a physicist or a chemist that, if he does not believe in the possibility of himself developing those subtler forces, he might utilise them in others in order to prosecute further his own investigations? They are beginning to to do that in France. They are beginning to now try to use those whom they call "lucid"; that is, people who see with eyes keener than the physical; they are beginning to use those in medicine, are using them for the diagnosis of disease, are using them for the testing of the sensitiveness of man, are beginning to use them to try to discover if man has any body subtler than the physical. And while I would not say to the scientific man: "Accept our theories," I would say to him: "Take them as hypotheses by which you may direct your further experiments, and you may go on and make discoveries more rapidly than you can at the present time." For there is many a clairvoyant who, put before a piece of some elemental substance, could describe it very much better than is done by your fractional analysis. And along other lines—chemical and electrical—surely there is something a little unsatisfactory, when a few years ago men told us that the atom was composed literally of myriads of particles, and during the last year it has been suggested that perhaps one particle is all of which an atom is composed. Might it not be wise to try to get hold of your atoms by sight keener than the physical, as it is possible to do, whether by the ordinary clair-

voyant who is sometimes developed up to that point, or by an untrained sensitive whose senses are set free from the limitations of the physical brain, and from that sensitive try to gather something of the composition of matter which may guide you in your more scientific search? I realise that what one, or two, or twenty people see, is no proof for the scientific man; but it may give a hint whereby mathematical deductions may be made, and calculations which otherwise would not be thought of. So that I only suggest the utilising by science of certain powers that are now available, keener than those of the ordinary senses—a new sort of human microscope or human telescope—whereby you may pierce to the larger or the smaller, beyond the reach of your physical microscopes and telescopes, made of metal and not of intelligence showing itself in matter.

Is there anything of value in Theosophical ideas, shall I say to the science of medicine? Some say it is not yet a science, but works empirically only. There is some truth in that; but are there not here again lines of investigation which the physician might well study? For instance, the power of thought over the human body, all that mass of facts on which partly is built up such a science as Mental Healing, or what is called Faith Cure, and so on. Do you think that these things have been going on for hundreds of years, and that there is no truth lying behind them? "The effects of imagination," you say. But what is imagination? It does not matter of what it is the effect, if it brings cure where before there was disease. If you put into a man's body a drug that you do not understand, and find that it cures a

disease and relieves a pain, will you throw the drug aside because you do not understand it? And why do you throw the power of imagination aside because you cannot weigh it in your balance, nor find that it depresses one scale more than the other? Imagination is one of the subtlest powers of thought: imagination is one of the strongest powers that the doctor might utilise when his drugs fail him and his old methods no longer serve his purpose. Suggestion, the power of thought. Why, there are records of cases where suggestion has killed! That which has killed can also cure, and man's body being only a product of thought, built up through the ages, answers more rapidly to its creator than it does to clumsier products from the mineral and vegetable kingdoms. Here again I only ask experiment. You know that you can produce wounds upon the body of the hypnotised patient, in a state of trance. By suggestion lesions are made, burns are caused, inflammation and pain appear by the mere suggestion of a wound. A blister is placed on a patient and forbidden to act; the skin is untouched when the blister is removed: a bit of wet paper is given by thought the qualities of the blister, and it will raise the skin, with all the accompaniments of the chemical blister. Now these things are known. You can see the pictures of wounds thus produced, if you will, in some of the Paris hospitals, for along this line the Frenchman is investigating further than the Englishman has done. And along that line also lies much of useful experiment to be brought to the relief of the diseases of humanity.

But as I have touched upon medicine, let me say—

for I ought here to say it—that there are some methods of modern medicine which Theosophy emphatically condemns. It declares that no knowledge which is gained from a tortured, a vivisected creature, is legitimate, even if it were as useful as it has been proved to be useless. It declares that all inoculations of disease into the healthy body are illegitimate, and it condemns all such. It declares that all those foul injections of modern medicine which use animal fluids to restore the exhausted vitality of man are ruinous to the body into which they are put. Here again France, by the very excess of its methods, is beginning to recoil before the results which have come about. Only two years ago I was told by a leading physician of Paris that many of the doctors had met together to look at the results which had grown out of the methods that for years they had been following without hesitation and without scruple, and that they feared that they had caused more diseases than they cured. Why are these things condemned as illegitimate? Because the building up of the human body is the building by a living Spirit of a temple for himself, and it is moulded by that Spirit for his own purposes. The higher powers of intelligence have made the human body what it is, different from the animal bodies out of which, physically, in ages long gone by, it has grown. Your delicacy of touch, the exquisite beauty and delicacy of your nervous system, these things are the outcome of the higher powers of the Spirit expressing themselves in the human body, where they cannot express themselves in the animal form. And if you ignore this, if you forget it, if you forget that this

splendid human temple built up by the Spirit of man through ages of toil and of suffering, to express his own higher qualities—compassion, tenderness, love, pity for the weak and the helpless, protection of the helpless against the strong—if you forget the whole of that, and act as a brute even would not act, in cruelty and wickedness to men and animals alike, you will degrade the body you are trying to preserve, you will paralyse the body you are trying to save from disease, and you will go back into the savagery which is the nemesis of cruelty, and ruin these nobler bodies, the inheritance of the civilised races.

I pass from that to my last world, the world of political thought. Now Theosophy takes no part in party politics. It lays down the great principle of human Brotherhood, and bids its followers go out into the world and work on it—using their intelligence, their power of thought, to judge the value of every method which is proposed. And our general criticism on the politics of the moment would be that they are remedies, not preventions, and leave untouched the root out of which all the miseries grow. Looking sometimes at your party politics, it seems to me as though you were as children plucking flowers and sticking them into the sand and saying: "See what a beautiful garden I have made." And when you wake the next morning the flowers are dead, for there were no roots, but only rootless flowers. I know you must make remedies, but you should not stop at that. When you send out your Red Cross doctors and nurses to pick up the mutilated bodies that your science of war has maimed, they are doing noble work, and deserve our

love and gratitude, for the wounded must be nursed; but the man who works for peace does more for the good of humanity than the Red Cross doctors and nurses. And so also in the political world. You cannot safely live "hand-to-mouth" in politics any more than in any other department of human life. But how many are there in the political parties who care for causes and not only for effects? That is the criticism we should make. We see everywhere Democracy spreading; but Democracy is on its trial, and unless it can evolve some method by which the wise shall rule, and not merely the weight of ignorant numbers, it will dig its own grave. So long as you leave your people ignorant they are not fit to rule. The schools should come before the vote, and knowledge before power. You are proud of your liberty; you boast of a practically universal suffrage—leaving out, of course, one half of humanity!—but taking your male suffrage as you have it, how many of the voters who go to the poll know the principles of political history, know anything of economics, know anything of all the knowledge which is wanted for the guiding of the ship of the State through troubled waters? You do not choose your captains out of people who know nothing of navigation; but you choose the makers of your rulers out of those who have not studied and do not know. That is not wise. I do not deny it is a necessary stage in the evolution of man. I know that the Spirit acts wisely, and guides the nations along roads in which lessons are to be learned; and I hope that out of the blunders, and the errors, and the crudities of present politics there will evolve a saner method, in which the wise of the nation will have power

and guide its councils, and wisdom, not numbers, shall speak the decisive word.

Now there is one criticism of politics that we often hear in these days. It is said that behind politics lie economics. That is true. You may go on playing at politics for ever and ever; but if your economic foundation is rotten, no political remedies can build a happy and prosperous nation. But while I agree that behind politics lie economics, there is something that lies also behind economics, and of that I hear little said. Behind economics lies character, and without character you cannot build a free and a happy nation. A nation enormous in power, what do you know of the way in which your power is wielded in many a far-off land? How much do you know about your vast Indian Empire? How many of your voters going to the poll can give an intelligent answer to any question affecting that 300,000,000 of human beings whom you hold in your hand, and deal with as you will? There are responsibilities of Empire as well as pride in it, and pride of Empire is apt to founder when the responsibilities of Empire are ignored. And so the Theosophist is content to go to the root of the matter, and try to build up for you the citizens out of whom your future State is to be made. Education, real education, secular education, is now your cry. They tried secular education in France; they destroyed religious teaching; they tried to give morality without religion. But the moral lessons had no effect: they were too cold and dull, and dead. Is it not a scandal that in a country like this, where the vast majority are religious, you are quarrelling so much about the trifles

that separate you, that the only way to peace seems to be to take religion out of the schools altogether, and train the children only in morality, allowing an insignificant minority to have its way? Why! we have done better than that in India, we Theosophists. Hindu Theosophists have founded there a College in which, despite all their sects and all their religious quarrels, they have found a common minimum of Hinduism on which their children can be trained in religion and morality alike. I grant it was a Theosophical inspiration that began the movement; but the whole mass of Hindus have fallen in with it, and are accepting the books as the basis of education. Government has recognised them, and has begun to introduce them for the use of Hindus in its own schools. That is the way in which we Theosophists work at politics. We go to the root to build character, and we know that noble characters will make a noble and also a prosperous nation. But you can no more make a nation of free men out of children untrained in duty and in righteousness, than you can build a house that will stand if you use ill-baked bricks and rotten timber. Our keynote in politics is Brotherhood. That worked out into life will give you the nation that you want.

And what does Brotherhood mean? It means that everyone of us, you and I, every man and woman throughout the land, looks on all others as they look on their own brothers, and acts on the same principle which in the family rules. You keep religion out of politics? You cannot, without peril to your State; for unless you teach your people that they are a Brother-

hood, whether or not they choose to recognise it, you are building on the sand and not on the rock. And what does Brotherhood mean? It means that the man who gains learning, uses it to teach the ignorant, until none are ignorant. It means that the man who is pure takes his purity to the foul, until all have become clean. It means that the man who is wealthy uses his wealth for the benefit of the poor, until all have become prosperous. It means that everything you gain, you share; everything you achieve, you give its fruit to all. That is the law of Brotherhood, and it is the law of national as well as of individual life. You cannot rise alone. You are bound too strongly each to each. If you use your strength to raise yourself by trampling on your fellows, inevitably you will fail by the weakness that you have wronged.

Do you know who are the greatest enemies of a State? The weak, injured by the strong. For, above all States, rules an Eternal Justice; and the tears of miserable women, and the curses of angry, starving men, sap the foundations of a State that denies Brotherhood, and reach the ears of that Eternal Justice by which alone States live, and Nations continue. It is written in an ancient scripture that a Master of Duty said to a King: "Beware the tears of the weak, for they sap the thrones of Kings." Strength may threaten: weakness undermines. Strength may stand up to fight: weakness cuts away the ground on which the fighters are standing. And the message of Theosophy to the modern political world is: Think less about your outer laws, and more about the lives of the people who have to live under those

laws. Remember that government can only live when the people are happy; that States can only flourish where the masses of the population are contented; that all that makes life enjoyable is the right of the lowest and the poorest; that they can do without external happiness far less than you, who have so many means of inner satisfaction, of enjoyment by the culture that you possess and that they lack. If there is not money enough for everything, spend your money in making happier, healthier, purer, more educated, the lives of the poor; then a happy nation will be an imperial nation; for Brotherhood is the strongest force on earth.

Part IV

The Field of Work of the Theosophical Society

The Presidential Address delivered to the Convention of the British Section of the Theosophical Society, held in Essex Hall, London, 7th July 1907.

The Field of Work of the Theosophical Society.

It is my duty now to bring to a close this Convention, and to bid you all farewell, to scatter to your various places and to do, let us hope, with fresh courage and deeper knowledge, the varied works which you are called upon to perform. And let me, before I take up the subject upon which I am to speak—"The Field of Work of the Theosophical Society"—let me, ere beginning that subject, say one word of gratitude to her without whom the Theosophical Society could not till any field, nor sow any seed—to H.P.B., our Teacher and our Helper, let us offer our heart's gratitude; for without her we could not have met together, without her we could not have learned the Theosophical teaching. It may be that many of us have learned much since she first taught us, but she was the first Teacher, and the Bringer of the Light. It may be that some, since they met her, have known their Master face to face; but it was she who led them to His presence, she to whom the possibility in this life was due. It may well be that had she not come some other might have come to do the

work, but that matters not to us; that she did it is her claim to our homage, and we, who live in the light she brought, may well pay tribute of gratitude to her.

What is the Field of our Society's work? It is sketched in our Three Objects; and those of you who have looked upon the Objects with care, in the various recensions through which they have passed, may have noticed that each one of them covers one of the aspects of human consciousness. In the first, that which declares the truth of the Universal Brotherhood, we have the field of work of the Activity aspect, the active principle of the consciousness, of the Spirit, which seeks expression in service to the race. In the second, the study of the religions and the philosophies of the world, we have the field of work for the Cognition aspect of consciousness, that which gathers together the fruit of knowledge; it is the Knower gathering the food by which he unfolds his powers. And in the third we have the field of work of the Will, the Power aspect of the consciousness, the deepest root of our being, that by which the worlds exist, as they are supported by the Wisdom, as they are created by the Activity. So that when we thus look at the objects of the Society and realise the relation that they bear to our conscious selves, we see that the field of the work of the Theosophical Society is wide as the world, and knows no limit where Will and Knowledge and Activity can make their way. And it is true, now and always, that everything which helps and benefits man is Theosophical work, and that nothing can be excluded from the sphere of our work

which includes every aspect of consciousness. So let us take this natural, this scientific division of our work, and see what we may do in each field which offers itself to the appropriate power in our nature.

The first will naturally cover all active working for humanity, all service which one can offer to another; and it will be well, in the days that lie before us, if we realise that there is no scheme for human helping, no possible effort for human uplifting, which is outside the field of work of the First Object of our Society. Every Lodge of the Society should make it one of its activities to serve humanity in the place where the Lodge is founded; and the value of the Lodge should be in the knowledge that is there gathered with the object of spreading it. For Theosophy should be your touch-stone as to the value of every scheme, as to the tendency of every proposition. In all the countless schemes around us in these active times, some work only for the moment; others, based on sound principle, are preparing the world for a better and happier future. By your Theosophical knowledge you can judge the value of every such scheme, and throw yourselves into those alone which work on lines beneficial to the future, which are laying the foundations of a civilisation greater than our own. For among the many schemes and many methods there are ways in which each man inspired by the Spirit of Brotherhood may find work that satisfies his reason and is justified by his conscience. And there is no one particular method, no one special road, along which the Society, as Society, can go. It lays down the principle of Brotherhood as an active working spirit in

the life of every member, and then it leaves the member free to use his own judgment and his own conscience as to which among the many methods recommends itself most to him as an individual. So that in speaking of that field of work, it is not for me to say: "This plan, that method, the other means, that is what you ought to follow"; but only that you are not carrying out the First Object of the Society, unless you are engaging your activity in some task which in your intelligence and conscience is working for the benefit of your fellow-men. That is a point I want to put to your Lodges; for when I see questions discussed as to giving new life to Lodges, vivifying Lodges, and so on, I know well that the only cause for the need of such discussion is because men allow the life to stagnate within the Lodge, instead of sending it forth a living stream to fertilise the place in which the Lodge is built. There would be no lack of life were it not that you keep it bottled up for your own advantage, for your own needs. The source of life is inexhaustible, and it only ceases to flow where there is stagnation, because it is not allowed to run out to the people who have need of it, but is kept within the narrow limits of a Lodge. If you worked as well as talked, if you labored as well as discussed, if you served as well as praised service, there would be no time and no need to discuss how the Lodges of the Theosophical Society shall be vivified.

Your Lodge should be your place of inspiration, the place where you learn how you are to serve, the place where you find the bread of life. But the bread of life is meant to feed the hungry, and not to surfeit those

already filled, to feed the hungry crowds around you starving for knowledge, that life may be made intelligible and thus tolerable to them; and it is yours to feed the flock of the Great Shepherd, and to help those who, without this Wisdom, are helpless. And all need it; not the poor alone, nor the rich alone, but every child of man. For the one thing that presses upon all alike, the bitterness of life, is the sense of wrong, the want of intelligibility in life, and therefore a feeling of the lack of justice upon earth; that is the sting which pierces every heart; whether the heart belong to the rich or the poor, it matters not. When you understand life, life becomes bearable; and never till you understand it will it cease to be a burden grievous to be borne; but when you understand it, everything changes. When you realise its meaning, its value, you can put up with the difficulties. And our work with regard to those around us is to bring that knowledge, and by that knowledge to lift them to a place of peace. That is the work which demands to be done, and which your Lodges have the duty of doing. For there ought not to be one scheme for human helping, in any place where a Lodge of the Theosophical Society is established, where in that Lodge workers may not be found ready and eager to give labor to the helping of their brothers amongst whom they live. What is the use of prattling about Universal Brotherhood, if you do not live it? Sometimes, in discussions on Brotherhood, it is spoken of as though it only meant soft words and well-turned phrases, sentimentality and not reality. It means work, constant, steadfast, unwearied work, for those who require service at our hands; not soft words

to each other, but work for the world, that is the true meaning of Brotherhood.

Pass from that to our next field of work, sketched out by our Second Object. Without that you cannot rightly work for Brotherhood, for you will not understand the knowledge already garnered. You must learn in order to teach, you must study in order to understand, and this Object is not carried on in our Lodges as effectively as it ought to be; for it is translated into one man studying, and pouring out the fruits of his study into the open mouths round him on every side. That is all very well in the beginning when the young bird comes out of the egg. It is necessary that the father and mother bird should pour food into the wide open beak; but some of you ought to have gone beyond that in the thirty-two years of life of the Society: you ought to be ready to help, and not only to be helped. And the life of the Society will not be healthy while so few are students, and therefore so few are fit to teach. Every Lodge should have its classes for study under this object. There are other ways in which you must learn as well as by the teaching of brother Theosophists, and there is a plan they are just adopting in the Paris Lodge for the work of the coming winter, which is a very good one; instead of Theosophists studying the books of scholars, and then giving out what they have learned, the French Lodge is inviting leading representatives of the various branches of thought, those specially interesting to us, in order that they may put their knowledge from their own standpoint, and that the Theosophist may have the advantage of listening to them at first hand.

That seems to me a very admirable plan, and I know not why in some of the London Lodges you should not try to take a leaf out of our French neighbor's book, and why one Lodge at least should not try, if only for one six months, to bring to that Lodge some leader in the world of thought, who shall tell it what he believes, and explain the lines of his work. If you could persuade specialists along the many lines of study, religious and philosophical, to give you the fruits of their work, you would learn more rapidly, you would learn the spirit of a school in a more satisfactory manner, than when you are only studying books, and then giving out the books you have read. You value, and rightly value, the knowledge that Mr Mead brings you along his special lines of study, but why should you not have that same advantage similarly from others who follow other lines of thought, and would speak similarly from first-hand knowledge? There is a life in it that there never is in second-hand knowledge, a vigor and strength in it that you can never get when it has only been learned second-hand, and then poured forth. Men who study deeply are glad to find audiences who are willing to listen to the results of their study, and who will give them glad hearing when they come out into the world from the study to tell what by labor and toil they have learned. And so I suggest that some of you should see whether you might not make your Lodges more valuable if, instead of always going round the same wheel of a few local lecturers, you tried to win to each locality now and again a really learned and well-trained man, and then, with your own Lodge as a nucleus of hearers, gather

round them others also who would be only too glad of the opportunity that your Lodge would give in the place where it happens to be. You have Lodges in the suburbs, Lodges in the towns outside the area of London, and how glad many of these would be, if you made yourselves the channels for knowledge of that sort to be poured out amongst them. There is one line of work you might well take up, and the country Lodges might do the same, winning down from London now and again some thinker who would come and give the benefit of his study; and if you were known all over England as the places where such knowledge might be gained, and the bringers of such within the reach of your fellow-townsmen, the Society would profit by your labor as well as those who immediately benefit by the effort. And wherever you deal with the study of a religion, learn it from the lips of one who believes it rather than by the exposition of one who does not; for only so will you catch the spirit of the different religions. If you would learn about Roman Catholicism, win a Roman Catholic student or priest to come and tell you how his Church appeals to him; or if you want to learn about the Church of England, win some clergyman who will come and tell you what that Church means to him; or about Buḍḍhism, win a Buḍḍhist to come and tell you what his own religion is to him; and so with the Hiṇḍu, and on and on, all round the different religions. For none can really tell what a religion is to its followers who does not believe in it, and no one can give you its spirit who does not feel it. And it is in that way that your Theosophy should lead you into sympathy with every form of

religious thought, learning it as it comes from the mouth of a believer, and not in the sort of warmed-up fashion in which one who does not believe it re-cooks it for his fellow Theosophists. There, it seems to me, is your field of work under the Second Object; and out of this study would grow literature, illuminating these various religions and philosophies, and from your classes should be evolved teachers, to carry to the different communities the results of their study on different lines, thus bringing the Second Object to the helping of the First.

I had a letter the other day from a good member of the Theosophical Society, and the writer said, being a Christian, that Christian lines of work attracted her, and she thought she ought to leave the Society in order to help people along those lines. But what sort of Theosophy is that? You who are Christians, or believers in any other faith, you should become Theosophists to help your own religions, and to bring them the life, not by leaving the Society, but by learning in the Society to help them; that is the duty of every believer in whatever religion you may happen to believe. For you should be messengers to the various religions, helping them to understand more deeply than many of them do to-day; and if you would understand that that is part of your duty, to help your own faiths, to enlighten those who will not come to the Theosophical Lodge but yet will listen to the fellow believer offering them the knowledge that in the Lodge he has gained, then the spread of our doctrines, rapid as it is, would be far more rapid and along healthy lines. For we do not exist as a Society simply to study, but to spread the light, and every

religion should be the richer and the fuller in proportion to the number of Theosophists that it enrolls amongst its followers.

Pass to the Third Object. There also we have work to do, and we cannot work for Brotherhood effectively without understanding the nature of man. And I feel that one or two who criticised the Society this afternoon on that point had the right to make the criticism that they did; for, while in the earlier days that Third Object was so carried out in the Society that it was the leader in the fields of all such research, it certainly now has fallen into the background, and is only a gleaner in the fields where others are reaping, and that is not right. The knowledge that you have in theory as to the constitution of man and nature, should be a guide to you in researches, and not simply remain theoretical knowledge. That which was said this afternoon about the Psychical Research Society is true. It goes into everything unusual with a prejudice against it, rather than with a feeling that there is something to be learned; but on the other hand, one is bound to say that during the last ten or twelve years that Society has done more to familiarise the public with these facts of the hidden powers of man than our own has done in practice, though we have done much more in theory. Now I am not in favor of much experiment preceding a study of theory; I believe that we need the theory in order to experiment wisely; but I also believe that having a true theory we should use it to guide our investigations, and thus to add to the knowledge of the world. A part of our work, it seems to me, that lies before us in the coming time,

is to help the world to walk wisely along those roads of research on which it has entered now. You cannot prevent it going forward along them, knowledge is already too widely spread for that; but what you can do is to help men to walk wisely, and to avoid many a pitfall into which otherwise they would be very likely to fall. And along those lines there is very much to be done: plans to be worked out, methods of research to be planned and tested; and I hope before very long to see some groups in our Society that will take up this special line of work as part of their activities, and, headed by someone who knows practically something of that with which he is dealing, will then help the younger students to learn wisely and to experiment carefully. And in these matters it is well, so far as you can, to bring the more scientific members of the Society into touch with this work; for one of the reasons that Spiritualism fell into discredit for a time was because the scientific and the thoughtful abstained from it, and left it in the hands of the credulous and the unwise. The leaders of the scientific world who ought to have joined in the work which Sir William Crookes, Alfred Wallace, and others began, instead of following them and strengthening their hands, turned their backs on it all, leaving it to be carried on by those who knew far less than they, and who were not accustomed to accurate observation and careful recording of phenomena. Now leading scientific men are beginning to work at it. Along all lines of psychical research work should be done by us, if we do not mean to cancel the Third Object in our Society.

Thus, then, a great field of work opens out before us, so wide a field, so great, that you would have no need to ask for work if you would only begin to labor along these lines. And take that other line about which Mrs Cooper Oakley spoke—the line of Historical Research into Mysticism. Has it ever struck you how much of the work of our forerunners remains unknown, because their work is not scanned by sympathetic eyes? How many of the pioneers in the past centuries lie under a heap of calumny, because none has tried to understand, none has tried to realise, the nature of their work? Men like Paracelsus, Cagliostro, and many another whose name I might mention, who are crying out, as it were, for research, and thought, and labor on mystical and occult lines. There again I have good hope that some really efficient work will be going on; for to my mind one of the purposes for which our Presidency should exist is to act as a centre round which every country may gather together, and thus communicate with each other, and form bodies scattered all over the world for mutual aid. The strength of our Society is in that unity of thought, which can only be brought about as one part of the Society realises that other parts are linked with it, as it ought to be, by the President of the whole. For the Presidency would be an idle show, if it is not to be a centre for inspiration and labor. The great work done by the late President is, as I have said elsewhere, practically complete; he has given the Theosophical Society an organisation by which it can work and live; ours to use the organisation that he made, ours to employ this splendid instrument which

is now in our hands for world-wide labor and for world-wide helping. That is the work to which I would summon you now, and pray your help. Let us not stand apart one from the other, and work always along isolated lines; in addition to the isolated work, we should have the combined work; for many often can bring about a result which one cannot do Take, for instance, the great libraries of Europe, far, far apart. It is very laborious for a person to travel all over Europe and labor alone in them all; but if we had students working in every great library, we should have feeders who would send in to a common centre the result of their work, which could then be shed over the world.

Along those lines the Society will become respected, when it is known for honest and useful work in all departments of human activity. There is no good in glorifying it by words and saying what a splendid thing it is, unless we justify ourselves to the world by the work which we contribute for the world's helping.

In this way, then, I would ask you to look at our great field of work. Laborers are wanted. There is more than work enough for all, and in this work the principle that must guide us is, as we have so often said, freedom of thought, freedom of expression. But let it be understood in the Society, for there is danger of this being forgotten, that there is freedom for those who assert as well as for those who deny; that all alike are free. Those who know have a right to speak, and there should be no outcry against them; those who do not believe have a right to say they do not believe, and there should be no outcry against them because they believe not.

But there is a danger lest those who believe not should think that they have the only right of speech, and that those who experience have no right to say out that which they know to be true. It is the danger which dogs the steps of Freethought everywhere. You can see it in France at the present time, where the Freethinker, smarting against the oppression of the Church, tries to silence the Church, as he has been silenced in the past; but it is a bad reaction, and we cannot have that within the Society—there must be liberty for all. I do not wish to impose my own beliefs on any man or woman in the Society, but I claim the right amongst you to speak the truth I know, and to bear witness to the reality of my Master whom for eighteen years I have served, without being attacked vehemently by those who deny my experience. I know whereof I speak. I ask you not to believe; that is your own choice. I ask you not to accept; that is for you to decide. But you have no right to try to stop my lips, nor to say that the assertion of my belief is outside the liberty allowed in the Theosophical Society. I, as President, will defend to the utmost the right of each to speak his thought—believers and non-believers of every type; but I will not recognise the right of any to impose upon the Society a dogma of unbelief, any more than a dogma of belief. Only by that liberty of all can we live and grow; only by the perfect freedom, and the recognition of every man's right to speak, no matter what he says, can the health of the Society be secured. For in the years that lie before us there is much new knowledge to be gained, many new facts to be discovered, many new experiences to go through, and we must not discourage

the seekers and investigators by making it difficult for them to speak amongst us. We need every fact that any human being can bring to us. We have the right to challenge the fact and investigate it, and either to say: "It is fact"; or: "To me it is not fact"; but we have no right to say to any human being: "You shall not search nor speak," for that would be the death-knell of our liberty, that the denial of the foundation on which we stand.

And so let us go forward to a future, I hope, fairer than anything we have in our past. Let us welcome all thought, all refusal of thought, all investigation, all speech, however different it may be from our own speech and thought, and doing this with full respect of each for each, full recognition that minds are different, and that each mind has its own sphere in which it can do useful work for all, let us encourage in our Society every school of thought, every form of opinion, every expression of thought which is in a man's mind. And out of all that clash of opinion, out of all that discussion, Truth should come out stronger, richer, larger than ever. And never mind if sometimes falsehoods are spoken; never mind if sometimes mistakes are made. An old scripture says: "Truth conquers, not falsehood"; for God is Truth, and nothing that is not drawn from His Life can live, nothing that is drawn from His life can die; and realising that, we can go forward fearlessly into the unknown future, sure that to brave hearts and true lives every experience, every failure, every mistake, is only another rung of the ladder by which we climb from ignorance into knowledge, from the bondage of matter into the liberty of Spirit.

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